



messing about in BOATS

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Special Feature This Issue
Great Five Day Small Boat Messabout

Volume 12 - Number 11

October 15, 1994



messing
about in

BOATS



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Our Next Issue...

Should feature our comprehensive coverage of the Small Craft Meet hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland on the first weekend in October. We plan to leave for the event right after this issue goes to press, and if all goes as planned, I should be able to cover events, designs, projects, and techniques all from that one trip, they're all there in one place! We'll also offset this with Walter Fullam's report on the Antique Race Boat Regatta at Clayton, New York in August, a rather different sort of boat meet.

Tom's "Race to Cuba" will continue, and we have a number of small boat adventuring tales ready to go if we have the room, along with more reviews, safety comments, all the usual stuff.

On the Covers...

"Mistress", an 18' Marshall catboat, leads the 25 boat fleet at Tony Davis' 2nd Annual Arey's Pond Catboat Gathering on Cape Cod's Pleasant Bay in early August, a quintessential summer scene on the Cape, "home" of the catboat.

Commentary...

Another fall is here, already, and as usual, where did summer go? All the plans made in spring for the coming summer season, how did they turn out? Well, probably not all one might have dreamed, but I have become sufficiently realistic about my messing about in boats now that I do not entertain any longer any specific goals for realization of any of my projects or hoped for activities. Some happen, most don't, so I've come to accept what does come to pass and roll the rest over for another try next year.

About this time of fall, with winter imminent and days growing shorter, and with summer heat gone, a renewed burst of energy seems to arise in me, prompted by some sort of instinct about squirreling away of nuts for the long winter siege. I look around at the carefree summer conditions of the house, barn, boatsheds, and greenhouses, and realize that, well, there's things to be done before the cold and snow if these buildings are to serve their winter purpose of sheltering us and all our possessions and ongoing projects. So it seems to become fix-it time.

The house needs quite a lot of maintenance. A long existing need to reshingle and repaint the south side, which the summer sun really blasts, once again is brought up. Can it be done? By us? In time? And there are some leaks again in the roof around an attic dormer that ought to be plugged before the inside rooms get their new wallpaper. And so on. Also the old fashioned wooden storm windows must be put on of course, all 21 of them on two stories. Maybe by Thanksgiving?

Many of you must have these commonplace domestic demands to face up to at this time of year. For me they relate to my messing about in boats in that I also look at the boatshop, deteriorated into a jumble of lumber, tools, partly done projects, and sawdust and think that maybe this winter I could really get to work out there as the winds howl outside, if only I could get to picking it all up. And replacing the stovepipe. And fixing one bad roof leak. And replacing the plastic on the attached "temporary" boat storage shed I put up in 1981.

Also, of course, I ought to do something about that nice 18' White outboard runabout out back, it's been under tarps for years now and isn't suffering much but it ought to be brought under better shelter until I can give it the cosmetic overhaul which is all it really needs to make it attractive to some potential new owner. Maybe in the boatshed this winter? But then, there's also the other shed down back with a decent half-restored Townie in it, that'll need some fixing up to withstand another winter, the shed, that is. And of course, the Typhoon sits under a tarp out back too, it's okay like that but cannot be worked on out there.

Many of you remark in your stories and letters about not having adequate space for boatbuilding. Well, I have plenty, whenever I needed more room as existing structures filled up, I put up something else. Or started to. To deal with this pressing need about three autumns ago I started yet another structure, a 20'x40' "pole building", basic farm shed open to the south side. The site was long ago levelled,

and postholes dug for ten timbers my son got for me from a construction company's dump. My building budget requires free, or very cheap, material sources.

I stuck them all into their holes and braced them plumb and began pouring concrete around each, that bagged ready mix, from the wheelbarrow. They seemed to need quite a lot. Still not all done! In the meantime the "building-to-be" as we have taken to calling it, has already filled up with several (almost but not quite derelict) boats, the small JD350 bulldozer we bought a few years go for major land reworking around here, and the Subaru parts car for our operational two. These artifacts patiently await cover, but it looks now like another winter will go by with forlorn poles reaching skyward from the drifts over and around the boats and vehicles.

So it's easy to see how I can be distracted from urgent house repairs with winter coming on. The major resulting effect is that the house gets only just enough done to it to survive another winter, and the boatsheds, etc. get even less. And when I'm at last ready to go to work in the boatshop on long put off projects, envisioning that idyllic winter scene many of us share in our imaginations of the cosy boat shop with it chuckling wood stove, a whole lot of unfinished readying of the site remains to be done.

What boatwork? I could bring the Typhoon around into that "temporary" shed if I first remove from it the several stored kayaks and the unrestored Chris Craft runabout that has crouched for years in one end of it. Remove to where? Yes, that is the question. Well, the kayaks could maybe go down back into the Townie's shed, if its not being worked on it can serve as a rack. But the Chris Craft? A problem. Maybe into the main boatshed over in a corner to again serve, beneath a tarp and simple plywood cover, as a storage bench. But first the stuff now cluttering up the workshop needs to be removed. To where?

So plenty of room for boatbuilding is not always an unmixed blessing. Those who know me well will be chuckling by now for they know I'll once again fail to meet this challenge, and will fritter away the winter doing only a few easy to do tasks, leaving the rest until it warms up in early spring and I can work outside on more substantial stuff. Like last winter, when I refinished the Typhoon's teak and reconditioned all the rigging and spars, because I could bring it all into the sunny greenhouse we built onto the south side of the barn in 1978, where it gets up to 80 on a sunny winter day (with no supplementary heat) and where the plants will not put in an appearance until mid-February. But that was it. Spring brought other demands and nothing more got done.

Well, again I am promising myself at this early stage on the long fall down into winter doldrums that this year I WILL do some of these things. Just as soon as we get back from our trip to St. Michaels, and settle on what really absolutely must be done to the house and do it, and do the other needed outdoor winterizing to buildings and machinery, and...



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Contributed by Tom Shaw

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Should You Really Do It Yourself?

I was doing Courtesy Marine Examinations at a local boat ramp not long ago and came upon an older 18' in-board/outboard which had been lovingly restored. The boat was an excellent example of superior craftsmanship. It showed all kinds of technical skill. Unfortunately, it also showed a lack of technical knowledge.

On this particular boat, the engine compartment extended from gunwale to gunwale. I opened it, as a normal part of the Courtesy Exam, to check the backfire flame arrestor and found an accident waiting to happen. Inside the engine compartment there was an aluminum beer keg which had been skillfully "converted" to a gasoline tank. The craftsmanship was first rate, but...

The gasoline tank was not vented to the outside. It was not grounded. It lacked the legally required anti-siphon valve. It lacked a fuel shut-off valve. It was connected to the engine with unapproved hoses. There were, of course, no baffle

plates in the tank. The only way to fill the tank was to bring the fuel nozzle inside the engine compartment, any spillage went directly into the bilge.

This was, in short, the most dangerous installation I have ever seen.

The saddest part of this, apart from the hazard and very real chance of explosion, was that this boat owner clearly had all the skills to "do it right". As his boat restoration showed, he was expert in working with wood, fiberglass and metal. He simply did not know what was required, both by law and for his own safety.

If there is a moral to this story it is that technical skill is not enough. A little expert advice could have turned this "floating bomb" into a safe and secure vessel.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary has a slogan, "Know before you go." When it comes to boat restoration that can be modified to "Know before you build". Your life may depend on it.

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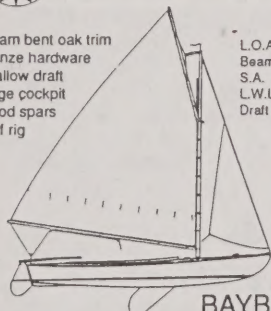
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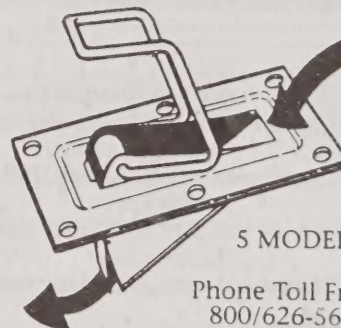
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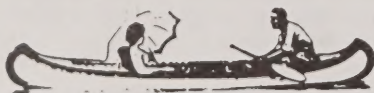
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BOOK REVIEW

Alongshore

John R. Stilgoe
Yale University Press, 416 pp.
Reviewed by Kent Mullikin

If a friend handed you a squarish package wrapped in plain brown paper and said, "Here's a book by a Harvard professor, published by Yale University Press," you probably would not anticipate anything like John Stilgoe's *Alongshore*. Once you unwrapped it, however, and admired the handsome dust jacket photograph of a lapstrake dinghy on a mussel-strewn beach, or noted the chapter headings on salt marshes, skiffs, harbors, wharves, pirate treasure, and bikinis, you might begin to suspect that this is not the usual academic monograph, notwithstanding its frequent footnotes and ample bibliography.

Your suspicion would be confirmed scarcely four pages into the introduction when the author breaks off a learned discussion of painterly terminology to assert, "The whole concept of seascape reeks of lubberly bias." There probably hasn't been a Harvard professor since Samuel Eliot Morison who'd have put it thus. Sure enough, this is an unusual book, and one of unusual interest to anyone who enjoys messing about in boats.

In his spirited introduction, Stilgoe lets us know that this is "a personal book, based on local observation." Throughout the book he is right there, though he buys a bit of ironic distance by adopting the persona of "the barefoot historian" rather than using the first person singular. Stilgoe comes by his personal involvement honestly, for he is a native and current resident of the shore of Massachusetts Bay between Gurnet Light and Minot Ledge, the immediate alongshore realm of which he writes. Make no mistake about it, he is a local, at home on the beach. Like Henry David Thoreau, whose *Cape Cod* is cited more than once, he distrusts enterprises that require new clothes. Indeed, his chapter on the bikini brings a formidable amount of historical and practical argument to bear on the question of whether clothes, bathing suits at least, are necessarily a good idea at all.

John Stilgoe has previously written a book about the representation of the American landscape, and he is clearly interested in the lay of the land, in this case that ambiguous part of the land that falls between the continent proper and the main deep. A recurrent theme of the present book is perspective, how we view the familiar and unfamiliar scene within the range of the human eye, from the details near at hand to the distant shapes on the horizon. In the company of the barefoot historian we look at a great deal up close: Mudflats, the underside of docks, abandoned watch towers, beached boats, and not least, the people on the shore. Gazing offshore, we see the horizon and sometimes beyond it, thanks to the phenomenon of "looming", the seaman's term for the occasional magnification of distant objects viewed over water.

And that brings us to another preoccupation of the barefoot historian: His fascination, some might say obsession, with out-of-the-way words. He introduces us to "loom-

ing" in the first chapter, and over the course of the book lingers lovingly over many other terms of the sea, shore, and inlet: "Calenture", "gunkhole", "gundalow", "guzzle", and "glim". It's hardly surprising to learn that another of his previous works is entitled *Shallow-Water Dictionary: A Grounding in Estuary English*. Some readers may not altogether share this passion for esoteric words, but it's at least an amiable weakness, and what sailor would deny the importance of correct nautical language?

A bare statement of chapter titles or subject headings would not begin to do justice to the rich feast of information in *Alongshore*, nor would it suggest the associative meandering of the text, which might be likened to a walk along the shore with frequent stops to inspect a found object or simply to let the mind sail free over the vastness of the sea.

A good example of this seemingly unsystematic but topically appropriate structure is the chapter entitled "Guzzle." A "guzzle" eventually gets defined in mid-chapter as "a low spot, usually on a barrier beach over which the sea now and then flows into the salt marshes inland from the dunes." To get to that point, however, we traverse a vast expanse of territory, all of it composed of sand, the real subject of the chapter. Along the way we pick up some useful local knowledge: How to walk on sand, how to sit in it, how to keep it from sticking to your sunscreen and out of your bathing suit.

We also take off on a global expedition in pursuit of quicksand, ranging from the deserts of North Africa to the American West, with a side trip to seventeenth-century Britain to pick up yet another arcane term, "syrt" (look it up). We travel in time from classical antiquity to the present, and before you know it we've taken aboard the sixteenth-century military art of fortification, Sir Walter Scott's *Bride of Lamermoor*, the film *Lawrence of Arabia* and a more recent cinematic effort entitled *Blood Beach*. The barefoot historian is an inveterate collector of surprising facts, which pile up, well, like sand.

There is much here to stir the imagination of the small boat enthusiast. The chapter on "Skiffs," is in fact about a whole lot more: The distinction between "yachts" and "boats", yacht tenders, catboats, the challenge of representing the intricacies of hull shapes in marine painting, the evolution and feminist implications of the outboard motor, and, after all, a well-rockered flat bottom skiff.

The chapter on "Harbors" incorporates a warm tribute to the wholesome lapstrake runabouts made by the Lyman Boat Works, a brief history of the rise of amateur boatbuilding, and a eulogy for the once-common marine railway. All of the above, and indeed the entire book, is copiously illustrated with prints, drawings, old photographs, and other visual material. Among the 240 illustrations there is a wealth of interesting stuff, much of it from the author's obviously extensive collection.

In a sense, the rest of the book is prelude to its penultimate chapter, "Risk." Here, the barefoot historian gets down to issues that evidently matter deeply to him. The kernel from which the chapter grows is a particular beach, virtually inaccessible from dry land, sought out by an intrepid band of alongshore venturers who make their way

through a tricky estuary in rowing boats, canoes, sea kayaks, and other small craft that can be hauled across expanses of low-tide shallows. These determined folk share a dislike of "crowded, 'stylish' beaches, jammed with people and equipment, of four-wheel-drive beaches, of noise and trouble and rudeness." Moreover, they have in common a state of physical fitness that enables them to make their escape from all of the above in their muscle-powered craft.

They and their secret beach appear in a virtually utopian light. The scene also occasions an impassioned sermon from the barefoot historian on the appalling flabbiness of most of the rest of the populace, a lament for the forgotten values of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, and a fond recollection of the culture of wholesome outdoor exercise in the decade between 1958 and 1968. (Despite his insistence that "nothing idyllic or nostalgic shapes these words," one can't help wondering whether those years happen to coincide with the adolescence of the barefoot historian.)

In contrast to the golden days of venturesome outdoor life, the barefoot historian sees the present as a time that collectively and officially distrusts exertion and the very idea of taking chances. He has little use for a number of current federal regulations designed to eliminate risk from the alongshore environment. Take, for example, the folly of building a boardwalk for wheelchair access across a beach exposed to winter storms and high tides. Part of this critique of an overprotective regulatory climate is grounded in the commonsense of local knowledge, which tells him the structure will be driftwood come spring. It is also linked, however, to an intense admiration for the physically fit

locals who are prepared to accept risk in order to have access to the water alongshore. The barefoot historian associates this elite (his term) with the small-boat revival of recent years, and quotes from such canonical sources as *WoodenBoat* and *Messing About in Boats*.

As a sailor and a lover of small boats, I am sorely tempted to buy this idealized portrait of the tough and independent alongshore adventurer. But something gives me pause. There's more to it than the beautiful fit people in small boats and bikinis versus the loud fat folks on the crowded shore. For one thing there are other types on the water. Not long ago I came across the complaint of a Maine lobsterman trying to cope with the dramatic increase in recreational boating that complicates his working day:

"Kayakers don't realize that radar doesn't pick them up in the fog. It's dangerous." To the barefoot historian the kayakers may be fit, competent individualists (though they too seem to travel in crowds) who accept risk as part of the fun. But to the lobsterman, they probably look like self-absorbed pleasure-seekers, ignorant of the headaches they occasion for the working waterman. They may even appear suspiciously like lubbers, it's a matter of perspective.

If I may be permitted a brief sermon of my own, all of us who follow the water for our own delight should keep in mind that there are others afloat taking risks not for the sake of risk but to pay the mortgage. It's not difficult to identify these others, they're the ones who aren't wearing bikinis. I'm sure that the barefoot historian, no slouch at local knowledge, is well aware of this; but he gets so carried away by his vision of the fit and

the fat that he oversimplifies the picture. All the same, the chapter on "Risk" will make you think about some of the intended and unintended consequences of environmental policy, federal regulations, and the way we live now.

As I remarked at the outset, if you enjoy messing about in boats or poking along the shore, you'll find this an unusually interesting book. There are shipwrecks, marsh channels, passages from little known books about the shore, pictures from early issues of *Rudder* magazine, and much more. If a friend hands you a squarish package in plain brown paper and says, "Here's a book by a Harvard professor published by Yale University Press," my advice is, "Open it!"

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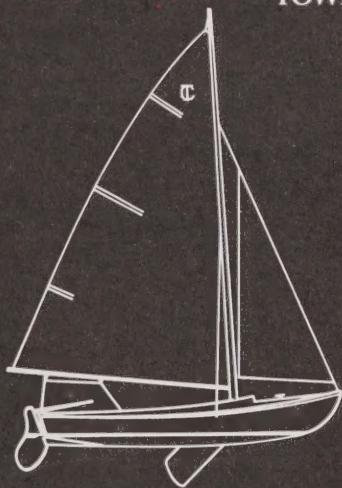
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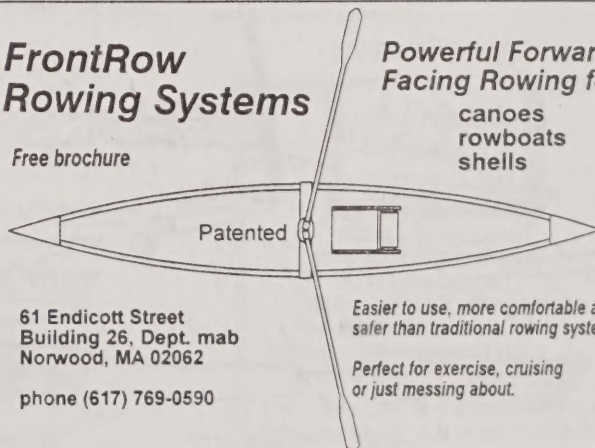
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The Race to Cuba

By Tom

I read in the local Sarasota paper that there was going to be a sailboat race from Florida to Cuba, so I bicycled to the Sarasota Yacht Club with a packed bag intending to crew on any boat that would have me. I pedalled past the Cuban protesters at the gate and asked Bob Winters, organizer of the race, if he knew of any boat needing crew. He knew of none as yet but suggested putting a notice on the bulletin board.



I put mine up beside one that said, "Available to crew, unlimited time. Can cook, navigate, have ocean racing experience, young, athletic, musician, also paint". Making my chances pretty slim. Later I learned he never got aboard a boat. Sailors are a strange lot. I had waited around most of the day getting discouraged, when another sailor looking to crew on a boat introduced himself. He had seen me putting my notice up on the board.

As we talked a 38' trimaran came in and tied up right in front of us. I examined it and thought to myself that it looked too competitive, dangerously fast and unstable, wondering how it would react in a rough seaway when the wind opposes the Gulf Stream. A serious minded skipper stepped ashore. Joe asked him if he needed crew. "Need one, maybe two," the skipper replied.

"Well, there's two crew available right here," Joe responded, including me in his offer. I desperately looked around for a nice fat comfortable monohull with a casual, comfort loving captain. There was none to be found.

"Show up tomorrow before 11 and I'll explain the boat. You don't have to bring anything, everything's aboard, I keep a light boat."

Joe and I had our passports faxed to Washington from the yacht club's office. It was a requirement of the race. I stayed for the skippers' meeting at 7pm where a state department official reluctantly admitted that we were not forbidden to go to Cuba, but we could not spend any money there or bring anything back, and that we were definitely not to have a good time. He further



explained that the crime rate was high and that it was a dangerous place. There was no American consul to help us in case of trouble. Then he made himself available for questions, only to reply to all of them, "I can't answer that question directly but if you do as you say you want to do you may find yourself in very serious trouble." He concluded with, "Security will escort you to the starting line, then you're on your own from there."

I bicycled back the next morning again through the Cuban protesters waving signs denouncing the race for breaking the embargo and aiding Castro's government.

"Shame on you for supporting a dictator!"

"Shame on you for running away from a dictator!"

"Free Cuba!"

"Why should we free Cuba? You free it!"

"You're breaking the embargo!"

"We're bringing food and medicine to your people!"

"We want a total embargo!"

"You overfed protestors are trying to stop food from going to starving people to get them to overthrow the government!"

"The government will take all your food!"

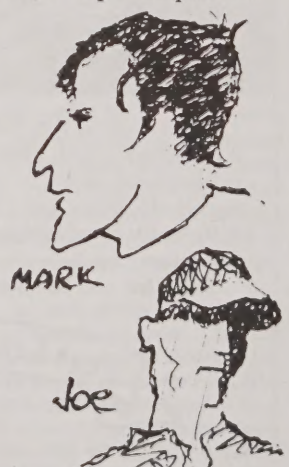
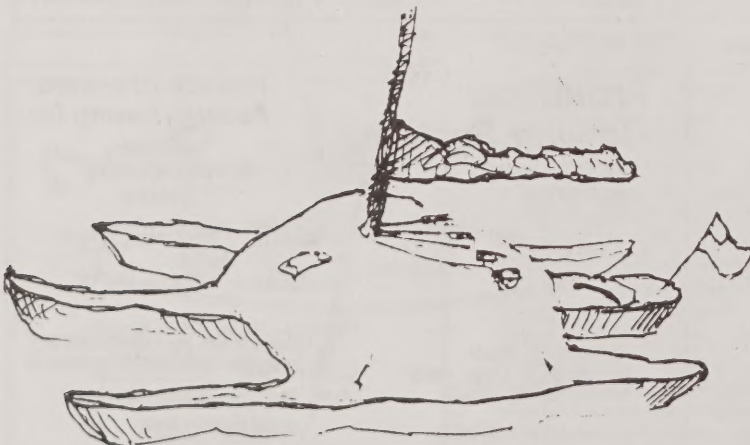
"Church groups will receive and distribute it!"

"We want Cuba before Castro!"

"Cuba before Castro was thought of as the brothel of the Caribbean, drugs, gambling, prostitution and poverty. 25 cents for a drink and 10 cents for a woman or a child. It was a wonderful place only for criminals!"

There were threats to the yacht club boats, Don Winters, and airplanes in Miami. I expected the boat to be shot at and was glad Joe was aboard. He had been in Special Services in Vietnam. We weren't allowed to carry weapons and unarmed people are the greatest temptation to paramilitary groups all over the world.

I chained my bike to a post and took my bag and knapsack aboard the boat. *Roamin Chariot* was its name. Designed just for speed with no frills. John was skipper-owner. Mark had repaired and rigged it. Kale was a young boy put aboard by his father for experience. Joe and I volunteered. This was the ship's complement.





BAGGING THE SPINNAKER

We helped bag the spinnakers, putting elastics on them every four feet so they would come out of the bags properly and break the elastics when they filled. John said he would familiarize us with the boat once underway.

We had some time so we watched a girl about 12 sailing an Optimist in and out amongst the big boats. She roll-tacked and roll-jibed with enviable skill. Then when we thought she had reached the limit of her performance she pulled the rudder off the transom and did equally as well without it. Standing at the bow she shifted her weight, pulling the boom from side to side. I told Joe, "There's someone we should have aboard to handle the sails."



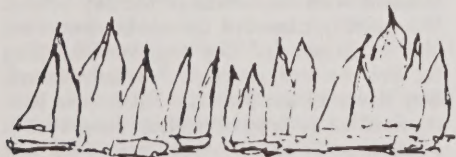
OPTIMIST

We cast off and motored to the bridge with the small outboard. The bridge was set to open at noon for all the racers to pass under at one time. At 12:15 the bridge was still closed with the boats impatiently crowding closer. Something must have happened to the bridge. Trouble had begun.



BRIDGE

It finally opened 20 minutes late. All the boats passed under escorted by police and Coast Guard boats, as well as helicopters overhead, out Sarasota Pass.



START

Eighty-four sailboats of all sizes were at the starting line forming a compact rat's nest of confusion. We stayed far away from it to avoid trouble. I heard the first gun but never heard another. We were several minutes late crossing the line, still staying

out of trouble. With all sails set we were doing 8 knots, the light wind off our starboard beam. We quickly passed through the entire fleet. Our course was set at 180 degrees, which was the rhumb line to the Dry Tortugas.



Joe, Kale and I sat on the starboard outrigger to keep the boat flat. Soon all sails were far stern with their hulls dropping below the horizon. Mark and Kale took turns sleeping on the starboard pontoon's bow to keep it from lifting.



BALLAST

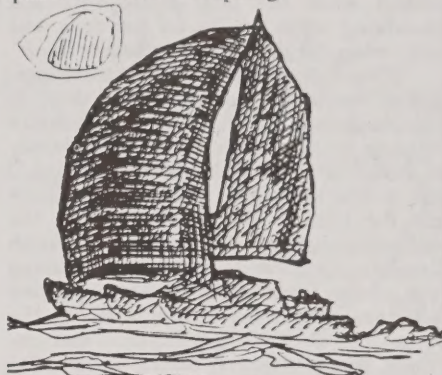
John never did tell us about the boat, where the liferaft was, man overboard drills, etc. I must confess to being reckless myself from sailing alone too much, but the safety of others scares the hell out of me. So here I must apologize to Mr. Shaw who has rightfully criticized me for ignoring safety at sea.

After thirty miles we sighted Rebecca Shoals. We had been pushed down east of them, we should have been west, closer to the Dry Tortugas. John was using a Magellan navigator and blamed the compasses. None of them gave the same reading. He confessed that the boat had been struck twice by lightning as an explanation. He had then calculated the rhumbline to Hemingway Marina in Havana. I never heard the "rhumbline" mentioned so often in a sailboat race.



STRUCK TWICE

We started the ninety miles across the Gulf Stream with a 12-15 knot west wind, luckily in the same direction as the current, causing only a slight chop. We were still hiking out when relieved from a turn at the tiller. We were flying the big spinnaker with no pole, there was no pole aboard. The boat was yawing in the following sea. It was difficult to keep the spinnaker from collapsing.



NIGHT

The sun soon sank into the water leaving us in tar pit darkness. I remembered that there was no horseshoe life ring hanging on the stern. I feared for the boy and asked John for his life jackets and harnesses. He handed them to us with a little smile and told us to not clip onto the shrouds because there was so much strain on them already. I had an urge to ask him how he'd like to sit through an inquest, because if anyone went overboard they would never be found in that darkness, and an inquest can find more things wrong with a boat after an accident than can be imagined. But luckily I kept my mouth shut.



HARNESSED ON

Kale's teeth began chattering. Joe told him to go below and get some sleep. "You don't contribute that much weight anyway," he added. During my turn at the helm, 3am-6am watch, I tied a flashlight to a life jacket to be thrown overboard if needed, something for the swimmer and boat to make for. Hopefully the flashlight would shine upwards.

(To Be Continued)



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For years I've been a sailboat sitter and sandwich maker. My husband and brother-in-law are the sailing enthusiasts. My sister and I sit on the boat, and make the sandwiches. Through bareboat charters in the Abacos and the British Virgin Islands, plus Sunday afternoons on Lake Lanier north of Atlanta, we women have barely tolerated sailing, shouting in protest when the boat heels over and grumbling when we lie on the deck and tacks whip the jib across our bodies.

This spring, when my husband suggested that the two of us charter alone in Pamlico Sound, I realized that the time had come to do more than watch. Temporarily in residence in the Raleigh-Durham area, I was within easy reach of the Neuse River and the fishing village of Oriental, the self-proclaimed sailing capital of North Carolina. Oriental is a sleepy, charming port on the Intracoastal Waterway, a tiny town founded in the 1870's that over the years has alternately prospered and declined, and that now is taking on new life as a retirement community for urban sailors. Oriental is home to two marinas, two boatyards and the well-stocked Inland Waterway Treasure Company. Oriental also boasts no less than two sailing schools, and all this despite a population of only 700.

I signed up for a two-weekend course at Carolina Sailing Unlimited. The school is run by Reg Fidoe, an affable but serious instructor whose British accent has barely diminished in two decades of life in the US. Reg's maximum class size is four. When another student canceled two days before the first weekend, I found myself taking private lessons. Reg's course is rigorous: Classroom work starts in the mornings at 8 am with afternoons on the river in *Puffin*, his 33' ketch.

The first afternoon set the stage for the entire course. With 15 to 20 knot winds blowing from the southwest, Reg gave me the helm and put up the sails. The first time the boat heeled over, I abandoned the wheel, confessing that "this makes me nervous." Reg reefed the mainsail, changed the furling jib for a smaller stay sail, and gave me a reassuring bit of sailing philosophy: "You should always sail with what makes you comfortable." Comfort brought confidence and by the end of the second weekend, I was actually looking forward to sailing.

There was one final hurdle before we picked up our charter at Whittaker Creek Yacht Harbor in Oriental. The trip was nearly aborted by a mysterious physical malady that afflicted my husband, Ray Ganga. Ten days prior to departure, a long-term dull ache in his left hip turned into excruciating pain that sent Ray to an emergency room on a Sunday evening. After visits to various doctors, he was reassured by an orthopedist that the pain was just a touch of bursitis. Armed with a vial of painkillers, we arrived in Oriental at noon three days later, Wednesday, May 25th.

The Whittaker Creek staff checked us out in *Eclipse*, our Cal 33. By the time we had loaded our gear, threaded our way out the channel and raised the sails, it was 2:45. The Neuse River at Oriental is some three miles broad as it widens to meet the Sound. That day it was filled with prevail-

On Turning a Sandwich Maker into a Sailor

By Eddy Bay

ing southwesterly winds and soon we were under way with a pleasant 15 knot following wind predicted to freshen as the day continued.

An hour or so later, we suddenly saw a flash of gray cut the surface of the water to starboard. Moments later, two dolphins arched out of the water to port. A third followed on his side just on the surface, scrutinizing us as we laughed in delight. We called out greetings and soon four appeared to starboard, swimming abreast and seeming to touch each other and the side of the boat as they surfaced. For ten to fifteen minutes the dolphins treated us to a performance, dashing under the boat, swimming in pairs, sliding along the surface and frolicking in foursomes. Then they disappeared, off to feed or perhaps to play with some other lucky sailors.

Alone once again, we concentrated on our course. Our destination was West Bay, an enormous inlet that offers the only sheltered anchorages on the southern edges of Pamlico Sound. Deep inside, West Bay divides into two arms. Long Bay stretches southwest past a restricted military area. The shorter West Thorofare Bay leads to Thorofare Channel which connects West Bay with the shallow waters of Core Sound just inside the southernmost barrier islands of the Outer Banks. For our purposes, West Bay also marked a mid-way point between Oriental and the popular Outer Banks destination of Ocracoke Island. Our plan was to anchor, and if winds on the following morning were favorable, to make a run for Ocracoke.

To reach West Bay, we followed the day beacons marking the ICW up the Neuse River to its mouth. Rounding the 24' flashing "NR" that marks the northwest limit of shoals off a large marshy area reserved by the military for target practice, we set a course of 105 degrees. We would need to skirt roughly seven nautical miles of shoaling before we reached the entrance to West Bay. Much of the time we would be out of sight of land, except for tiny Swan Island that we expected to see to starboard about halfway.

Meanwhile, the wind, as predicted, had freshened and the chop was turning into sharp steep waves. Now on a beam reach, the boat became more and more difficult to control. We reefed the mainsail, then put in a second reef. After a while, we lowered the jib and started the motor. By six o'clock, after more than an hour on our new course, we had still not seen Swan Island. The boat continued to buck and yaw, and the waves seemed decidedly more threatening. A fishing vessel loomed directly in our course. We passed it to leeward, decided that we had been drifting off course and changed to 200 degrees. Even reefed, the mainsail was proving too much

for us, so we lowered it, and continued under power alone.

Earlier, we had noticed helicopters off in the distance, and assumed that they were associated with military activities in the prohibited area. Now a marine helicopter materialized and hovered over us. Did they think we were in trouble? Were we in trouble? Momentarily I imagined darkness falling and us lost in the Sound, with the wind and waves whipping us towards shoals in virtually every direction. The helicopter moved on, and Ray shouted that he saw land, Swan Island at last.

We motored on, but the land was too large for Swan Island. A marker emerged out of the late afternoon haze. Could it be "2WB," the entrance to West Bay? As Ray turned the helm towards the marker, I went below and checked the Loran. Our position checked out. We were precisely where we needed to be. The marine helicopter returned for a final pass, and we waved gaily, we all now knew that *Eclipse* was headed to safety.

After another thirty minutes of motor-ing nearly directly into the heavy chop we entered the West Bay channel. Dusk was falling, and we made some calculations about our rate of speed and the growing darkness. The closest anchorage would be in West Thorofare Bay. We decided to make for flashing beacon "10WB." For more than an hour we strained to see each day beacon marking the long zigzag channel through West Bay. Eventually, "8WB," which marks the division of the Bay into two arms, came into view. It began to flash as we watched it. Once past, we were able to make out "10WB," shielded in part by three shrimpers rocking along towards us under the weight of their nets.

With darkness falling, the four-second flash of red light was as welcoming as a firestone on a winter's night. We cleared the beacon and Ray went forward to lower the anchor while I moved us slowly out of the channel towards the low line of marsh to starboard. By 8:30, the anchor was set and we went below for dinner. Ray was elated at our day's work. I had feelings of accomplishment mixed with numbness at the memory of us being pummeled by waves, out of sight of land and threatened by nightfall. The next day, I figured, had to be better.

The following morning, the soft chop in our sheltered anchorage was heavier. The marine forecast called for 25 to 30 knot winds with a small-craft advisory, and predicted a 70 percent probability of thunderstorms late in the day. All I could think of were the waves of the day before. We quickly canceled Ocracoke, but what else might we do? Ray suggested heading for the western areas of Pamlico Sound, Bay River or the Pamlico River, but both required us to brave the same long stretch of landless Sound. The memory of the day before was too strong. I refused to leave West Bay. Reg's rule said that you sail with what makes you comfortable; nothing was going to make me comfortable that day. With some reluctance at his crew's mutiny, Ray agreed to spend the day in West Bay.

The cruising guide describes West Bay as "a large, delightful body of water which has heretofore remained undiscovered by

pleasure boaters. " We soon realized why West Bay had failed to attract the pleasure trade. Marshes or shoals in all directions discourage land exploration. There are no buildings of any kind visible, except for the off-limits military restricted area with its massive airplane-hangar sized structure and transmission tower. By night, its flood-lit exterior evokes spy-thriller plots of hidden submarine bases and top-secret military schemes to kill dictators with exploding cigars. By day it receives and sends off a steady stream of visitors from Thorofare Channel on a slightly shabby speed boat with a tattered American flag.

Indeed, the most excitement visible was in the direction of the channel, where we could see the partial arch of a bridge under construction, its piers supporting about two-thirds of a roadway. That, we realized, had to be a replacement for the present swing bridge over Thorofare Channel. The new bridge will carry uninterrupted the traffic headed for the Cedar Island Ferry to Ocracoke.

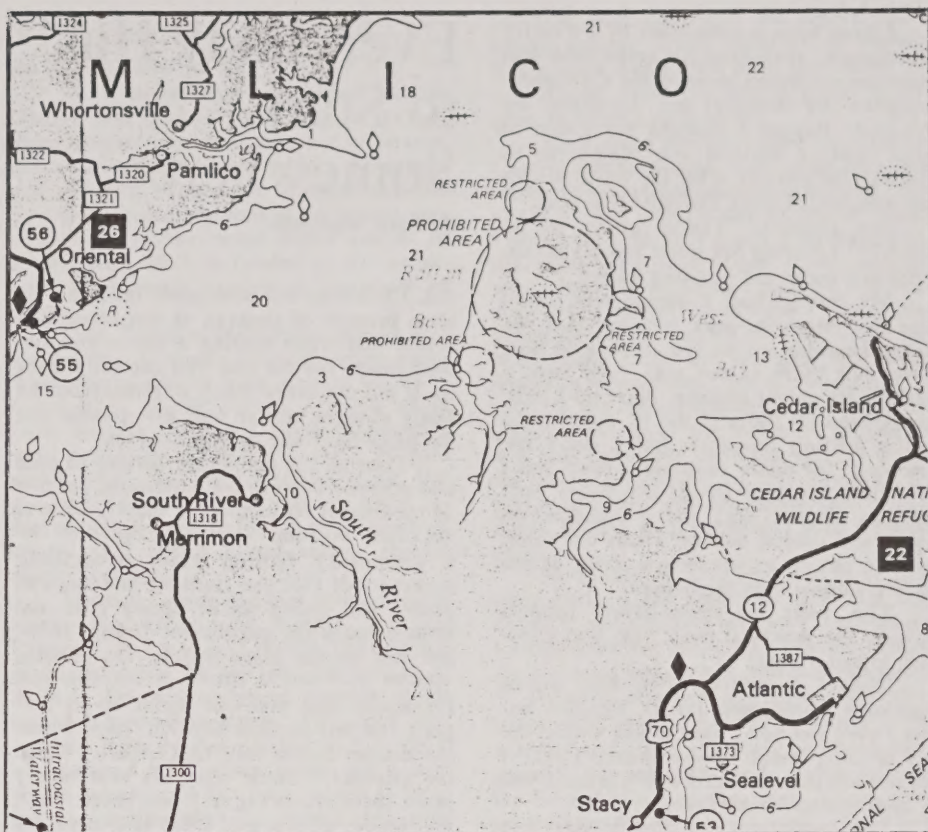
With entertainment and exploration possibilities limited, and with Ray's bursitis forcing him to take a regular stream of painkillers, we settled for a sail to the mouth of the Bay and a leisurely search for a new anchorage. By mid-afternoon, we were settled further down Thorofare Bay on two anchors in six-and-a-half feet of water deep in a field of crab-pot moorings. The marine radio was now predicting that the wind would shift to the north just after midnight. Meanwhile, it blew relentlessly from the southwest. We found ourselves wondering, if this was a protected anchorage, what it would feel like to be exposed to the wind.

After supper that evening, Ray admitted that his pain had increased, that it was as bad as it had been two weeks before when he had gone to an emergency room for relief. I was stunned. It was growing dark, and it was far too late even to consider trying to go back to Oriental. Should I call the Coast Guard, or maybe our Marines? I imagined Ray being lifted out of the cockpit in a stretcher and winched up to the waiting helicopter.

Then in quick succession, I had a ludicrous dream-like sequence of ideas interlaced with bits of information from my sailing course. Which level of emergency was this? Mayday? or was it "Pan-Pan?" Certainly it was too serious for "Securite." Should I try to get help from the military speed boat? Or some passing shrimper? If I did call for help and we left the boat, what would happen? If salvagers got it, we'd certainly lose our \$500 deposit. But would we have to buy a replacement boat, or would insurance cover the losses? In the end, I vowed that at first light we would leave, no matter what the weather.

Meanwhile, we took half the ice from our icebox and fashioned a pack for Ray's hip. It provided some relief, and we settled down for the night. Ray slept fitfully, and I was not much better, getting up several times to go on deck and make sure that the flashing green "11WB" beacon was still in place less than a half mile to the east.

By daybreak, the wind had dropped. I went above to check our position and panicked for a moment. We seemed to have drifted into an entirely new world. I recognized nothing. A soft rain had turned ev-



everything to shades of gray. Land and water were flatter and broader, and the low edge of the marshes seemed much farther away than the previous afternoon. Then I realized that "11WB" was where it should be.

The wind was still from the southwest, and in the distance to the east the new bridge was alternately appearing and fading pier by pier as low clouds passed through it. A boat materialized with yellow slickered men checking crab pots. They acted as if we were invisible as they slowly motored around and past us. A crewman worked to an easy unbroken rhythm as he lifted each pot with a hook, emptied its contents on the deck, dropped a replacement, and began again.

Ray was slightly better, so we had coffee and found our own foul-weather gear. I went forward to hoist the anchors and wash off the bottom's gray mud. Meanwhile, Ray handled the helm. Once under way, he settled into a corner of the cockpit with the remainder of our ice. The night before, I had plotted our course from the entrance of West Bay. By the time we cleared the last marker, the wind had begun its shift, and we moved dead into the wind on our 310 heading. Wanting to motor on the most direct course possible, I had decided to run along the shoals, so we kept a close watch on our depth. This time, Swan Island came into view as expected on our port side.

With time, the weather began to clear, and I realized that I wanted to raise the sails, to prove to myself that I could work a boat single-handed. After we changed course to 235 degrees, I hoisted the mainsail and jib, took out the reefs that we had used the day before and set to trimming the sails. Ray felt well enough to take the helm while I winched away, trying to eke maximum speed out of sails whose tell-tales stubbornly refused to stream.

With the motor off and our speed still a respectable 5 to 6 knots, we cleared "NR" and turned into the mouth of the Neuse River. The wind, continuing its shift to the north, became fitful, and broken and uneven clouds threatened more rain. For a while, we were nearly becalmed, and returned to motoring.

About one o'clock, when we were off Gum Thicket Shoal on the north bank of the Neuse, I went below to find something to eat. Ray was in pain, but willing to take the helm as needed. Suddenly the boat began to hum. By the time I climbed out of the cabin, Ray had stopped the engine and was exclaiming that our speed was up to 10 knots. Our burst of speed set our adrenaline aflow, and helped temporarily to lessen Ray's pain. The wind remained fresh and strong as we flew all the way back up the river, jibing dangerously close to shoals on the south bank before our final tack across to Oriental.

By the time we had docked, Ray was unable to walk. That night, he slept in a hospital in New Bern, having received a shot of morphine along with his diagnosis of a ruptured disk. Our next problem would be to transport him home to Atlanta. But that is a landlubber's tale to be saved for another setting.

Ray is now recovering. He can walk again, and hopes to strengthen his back through exercise. When friends ask us about our Oriental charter, we laugh and recite the old joke, "Apart from that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play?" In fact, our "play" was superb. Ray says that it was a great experience for him to realize that he does not need to be wholly responsible for a boat. I am pleased to have discovered that I know something about sailing, and that I am able to apply my knowledge to good effect. We are both looking forward to more adventures afloat.

I have been a subscriber to a *Family Handyman* magazine for some time and when the magazine showed the *Cartopper* designed by Bolger and finalized by Dynamite Payson I thought I'm going to build that. I handed the magazine to Juanita (the partner with the more sense) and told her, "I think I'll build that boat."

She replied, "You're going to do WHAT?" Ignoring her good sense I inventoried my tools and building space.

My shop is half a garage with about four feet between work benches that run along the sides, so no four foot wide boat there, but there is the side yard with a fairly level gravel topping. Next do I have enough tools? There is the 6" metal lathe and a milling machine, but I don't see much use for either building a boat. But I did come up with an elderly Sears skill saw, an electric drill and a combination finish and orbital sander. I can use these tools to put up an occasional shelf, or put up new curtain rods for Juanita.

The next question from Juanita (always the practical one), "Do you know how to sail a boat?"

"Sure," I replied, "I've read all of Forester's Hornblower books. Besides, before I ever met you I used to sail around the bay at Long Beach every chance I got." I did not add that was before WWII and I was in high school at the time.

The boats at Long Beach were cat boats called flatties and I don't remember much about them except they were covered in canvas and had a very broad beam which made them ideal rental boats as you could not capsize one in a gale.

The next step was to send away for Dynamite's plans and at the same time I sent away for the sail, hardware kit and the epoxy kit before I lost my nerve. For some reason the first thing to arrive was the sail, a nice tanbark color. I wanted to show Juanita our sail and started to unroll it in the living room. Who would have thought you could get that much cloth in that little sack? OK, so take it out on the grass in the front yard and unroll it. Wow, it sure looks bigger than I thought it would be. In due time the epoxy, plans and all the rest arrived, so it was time to start.

A visit to the local home center with my shopping list in hand showed that finding "clear" fir was a lost cause here. I asked around and made some phone calls and found a lumber yard that did keep the clear wood separate from the fence building material. A couple of hundred dollars poorer I came home with several sheets of ACX ply, several 1"x6" boards and a couple of long (16') 2"x6" planks and a whole bunch of 2"x4"s.

Now, to start. I could not lay out the ply on the gravel so the only solution was to put the cars out on the street and start butting ply sheets together on the driveway. (Does anybody know how to get epoxy off concrete?). I did not have any problems with the layout because of the plans Dynamite furnished. I drew all the bulkheads and the five long panels. I checked by putting the dimensions in my computer and ran off a set of 2"=1' plans and made myself a 1/6th size *Cartopper* that I now sail in my pool.

The magazine said you can cut the curved panels with your hand held circular saw. Well, you can if you don't do what I

Everybody Has to Start Somewhere

By John Meacham

did. I followed the little guide notch on the shoe instead of looking at the blade and found that when cutting a curve you run well inside the cut line you carefully drew in. It did not make much difference on the fairly straight bottom and side panels, but the bilge has more extreme curves.

I cut all the temporary battens to plan and screwed them to the bulkheads, put two of the former on temporary stands, screwed on the bottom and side planks for a temporary fitting. Hah, everything looks good! Got the transom and stem in place, still going great; epoxy glue and bronze nails for permanent fixing. Now, let's put on the bilge panels. Oh shucks, spaces you could throw a cat through. Dynamite says you can suffer up to 1/4" gaps, but this is more like 7/8" gaps where the sharper curves fall. That's when I found the mistake I made with the saw, every place there was a curve I was short. Well, the lumber yard is still there and more ply is not too expensive compared to what I already had spent.

All done with the hull, now to fiberglass the whole thing. I have used epoxy on models so I wasn't too apprehensive. The glass did go on fairly easily and after a couple of finish coats of epoxy it looked pretty good to me until I started to paint. The primer looked fair, not good, but fair. But the first coat of gloss white showed every bit of cloth weave, lap and seam. I considered power sanding to smooth and glossy, but decided on strong, not pretty. After some conversations with various persons I think the cloth "floated" in the resin, plus I did the job in the sun which I now know is a "no no".

Now, I was ready for the mast, boom, gunwales and tiller. I was able to borrow an outfeed roller for my improvised table saw. I called in a couple of friends and started with the shorter 10' boom. This went all right, 1-1/2" square out of a 2"x6". Next, the 16' 2"x6" for the two mast pieces. About halfway through the second cut the saw decided it had taken enough abuse and the motor went up in a cloud of smoke.

So, off to Sears again. "How much to repair this saw?" I asked. I was told they would look at it for \$40, but we have this more powerful saw on sale for \$64 today. I now have a new saw. Finished the rest of the long ribs single handed and the new saw did not even get warm. To glue the mast halves together I borrowed clamps from everybody I thought might own one or more. That was done. About this time I learned that my step-son had a belt sander and an electric plane. Sometimes borrowed tools are the best way to go if the owner is family and can't get too mad at you for borrowing tools.

Boat finally done. Painted, named "Beats Workin" (the misspelling is deliberate). Got a friend to help put it on top of

my Cherokee Jeep and off to the lake with boat and Juanita. Slid it into the water. I'll be darned, it floats and doesn't seem to leak. Step the mast, set the sail, climb in. Boy, it's tippy! I told Juanita that I better try it alone, then if the boat is all right I'll come back and pick you up.

So I sailed out a ways and it did sail. Juanita was getting anxious so I better come back. Let's see, according to Payson's book where he gives advice on sailing, it's better to come about than to jibe. So, let's put the tiller over and come back the way we came. First tack, OK, but I need to go a little further before I can catch the shore. Whoops what was that? I was so busy between the tiller and main sheet I forgot to look where I was going. I ran down a buoy that said "shallow water". Well, no damage apparent except to my pride, let's tack again.

What's this we're going backwards? How did that happen? This short trip I learned, "You cannot tack if you don't have enough speed to carry you over the dead point." I finally got the boat back to shore somewhat in the area I wanted and received a round of applause from some interested sail boarders who were resting on the bank. Now Juanita thought she did not feel like sailing today.

Next trip I went by myself. Sailed out and tacked, jibed and was having a great time. Wanted to sail up to the other end of the lake just for fun. Went around the buoys that outlined the jet ski and water skier area and on up the lake. I was really starting to enjoy this. Settled down on a port tack about on a broad reach; arranged myself with my back and head resting against the port gunwale and my feet up on the starboard gunwale. Boy, this is the life!

Whoops, the wind around the hill at the far end of the lake comes in over the other side. There I was with my feet above my head, no way to move quickly and the boat listing more and more and the sheet tangled around my legs. Soon water was running in over the gunwale and I said "goodness me, I'm going to tip over." I was right (see, I'm getting smarter already). The water was about chest deep there, but I did learn that the life jacket does work. I pushed the boat to the nearest shore, tipped it up to empty the water and got back in, kneeling this time, so I could shift my weight easily.

Next problem, I sailed by the jet ski area and now I had to sail back. The passage around the buoys is about as wide as a city street, and of course, the wind was straight up that narrow channel. Well, I needed the practice in tacking anyway, but not soaking wet, tired and thirsty. Returned home just fine, but got a lot of teasing from my ex-friends (I may forgive them someday).

I found a 1-3/4 horsepower outboard for sale at a fair price, so now I think we better try the small motor for a fishing trip. I called one of my friends who I knew liked to fish and proposed a fishing trip. Took the boat to the lake again, this time with the motor. Started out fine.

Jim said, "I think there are a lot of bass over there near the shore where the brush overhangs the bank." Well we went over there. No one told us that at that bank there are a bunch of rocks about three

inches under the surface. The motor was at trolling speed when we went up on the rock so no damage was done. But, we were hooked up there about 15 minutes trying to find where all the rocks were located.

Jim thought the bow was right on a rock, so he came aft and tried to rock us off. I looked over the transom and saw the motor skeg was on a rock, so I thought that was our hang up. Tried to pole off, but every time we would get caught on another rock. Apparently we came in through the only open channel in that rock garden. (As we left to come home we saw another boat hung up in the same rocks).

Then across the lake to another likely looking fishing spot. Then Jim had to go to the bathroom and wanted me to put in to shore. I ran the boat gently up a mud bank and Jim got out and went to a nearby tree. Here the only problem was when he came back through the mud about thirty pounds of sticky clay stuck to his feet to be deposited on my pretty light blue boat interior.

After getting the boat back home from the rocky experience, examination showed the rocks had scraped paint off, but the epoxy and fiberglass sheath was still whole and undamaged. A little paint fixed all the damage.

That is the story of my first boat. Nothing but problems, moments of sheer panic, repairs after every outing, money down the drain and all I can say is that I'm having the most fun since my honeymoon. I just ordered Dynamite's book on the 12' cat, and am debating what to build for my next boat.

The Green Canoes

By Stephen DuPont

As a small boy my older brother George was mad to build a boat. He and older brother Paul built one out of boards, maybe four feet square with a 45 degree pointed bow. The main section and the bow were nailed together at the center with a one-foot square board and a couple of dozen nails. Well it floated in the swimming pool mostly because it was made of wood.

Then *Popular Mechanics* ran an article on how to make a small canoe using what was available from grocery stores in those days, barrel staves. These came from barrels of fish I think, somewhat over a foot in diameter. I won't go into great detail, not remembering it all, but the article gave the idea, and any smart father should be able to do the rest, except of course that today barrel staves are no longer available.

The end boards and two section forms were sawn from pine boards, and the stringers of, I suspect, plaster laths which were available before the invention of drywall. These were bound together at the intersections with string. The boat was covered with canvas, nailed to the parts, and painted with green house paint into which stearic acid had been mixed to keep the canvas flexible. The stearic acid was available at hardware stores for porch covering paint and the like.

My father saw the wisdom of this design and had some oak ribs bent up at the boat yard, and mounted to some forms he sawed on the bandsaw which were nailed to the floor of the shop, and we built several

of these little canoes in the future years, using copper rivets instead of string. Pop's boats had faired lines instead of the cylindrical center portion typical of the grocery store barrel staves.

They were always called the "Green Canoes", their length was eight feet and width about sixteen inches as I recall. We always carried at least two on his 60' yacht *Theano* and the kids could drop them over the side alone and climb down and go where they chose. Once I paddled one outside Point Judith breakwater, where the ocean waves were so big I could not see the breakwater from the troughs. We were taught to swamp them, get the water out by jerking the boat endways while swimming, then grasp the opposite gunwales and pop ourselves over the side to sit in the normal position on the bottom. At first we paddled with our hands, later with a kayak paddle, then preferably with a canoe paddle.

No family of boys ever had more free unsupervised fun than we did with the Green Canoes. When my boys came along I substituted for the Green Canoes, chine dory shaped but double ended boats made of plywood screwed and glued to chine strips and stems. Gunwale strips were screwed and glued after they had been temporarily braced with cross sticks to hold the bowed shape of the sides. There were no bulkheads. The boats were eight feet long. I had my sons make cardboard models of what we'd planned, and then we lofted these onto full size on 3/16" plywood. They were useful for kids up to 15 out or so years old.

It sure in hell beats watching the boob tube. Try it! You might like it!



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A bow wave forms as power is applied in the "Men's Double Skiff Race."

A well placed jab at the head and this tilter is knocked out of his canoe.



Muskoka Lakes Centennial Messabout

By John Duncan

One hundred thirty years ago, residents of cities of southern Ontario as well as western New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio were hearing about a land of clear blue lakes, a day's journey north of Toronto. The trip could be made by stage over rutted and bumpy roads or by rail as far north as Gravenhurst, then steamboat on the Muskoka Lakes. These are three major lakes, each about thirteen miles long, 300 feet deep and plentifully scattered with islands large and small. Hunting, fishing and logging were the attractions, as well as the 100 acre land grants the "crown" was giving to settlers. Cottages sprang up along the shores and by 1894 there were enough people summering on the lakes that the Muskoka Lakes Association was formed for the purpose of protecting the quality of the lakes and promoting recreational activities.

This summer the MLA held its Centennial Aquatic Regatta, one of the longest running regattas in North America. It is a day-long affair for all ages; a well organized messabout for swimmers, paddlers and rowers!

The morning is for the youngsters, 13 and under, with more than 40 events, generally run in two-year age brackets. On a glassy lake at 9:00 o'clock the starter lined up the rowing skiffs for boys' singles 12 and 13 years old. The skiffs are very similar to the St. Lawrence skiff and were originally used by the trappers and fishing guides as working boats on the lakes. I remember my mother telling me about old Mr. Forge who would be seen early in the morning, with his "rowboat"

full of freshly killed lamb for delivery to cottagers on the lakes. In the evening he would return, boat floating high and empty, having rowed thirty or forty miles since morning. These boats were built of local cedar, lapstrake with copper clenched nails; 16 to 17 foot "double-enders" generally with two double oared rowing seats. Sliding seats or outriggers were unknown and the regatta still prohibits them.

Canoe races alternate with the skiffs and there is a continual procession of boats heading out to the starting line, sometimes as many as 25 or more in one race. The Girls Tandem Canoe, 9 years old and under, is followed by the Family Canoe Fours requiring two adults with their children. This year a new event was added for 7 and unders, an eight foot flat-bottomed, home built boat called the Wee Skiff. She was designed to get the littler kids into rowing and proved to be a great crowd pleaser.

The morning races ended with swimming and diving events, followed by prize-giving. There were many smiling young faces and proud parents as the Centennial Medals were awarded.

At midday there was a vintage boat parade. Muskoka is the birthplace of the Disappearing Propeller boat, fondly known as the DP or "Dippy," and one of these, about 70 years young, chugged past the spectator docks with its one-lunger making its familiar pftt-pftt-pftt exhaust sound. A beautiful varnished "Sunnyside Cruiser" was shown. This is the canoe developed after World War I in the Toronto area and was one of the fastest of its time. They are still considered too fast to be allowed in the Regatta; most of the canoes being traditional in style, canvass covered or wooden. A small private steamer and several gentlemen's inboard racers from the 1920's completed the parade while the deep-throated whistle of the 105 year old *Segwun* could be heard beyond some islands. I've been told she is the last surviving inland lakes steamship operating in North America.

In the afternoon, the 17 and under group had its own races while most of the others were for "all ages" except a few set aside for the 40 and over gang. Men and women teamed up to vie for the Wahoo Trophy in the Mixed Tandem Canoe race, with more than twenty entries. The last boat race of the day broke all records as the starter tried to line up thirty to forty canoes, each with four paddlers aboard. Needless to say, it was a fun race on a warm sunny afternoon as many of the heavy-weights barely got off the start line before they were swamped.

Fun races, such as the Out & In Tandem Canoe are sprinkled throughout the schedule; it is amazing to see how the practiced ones were able to jump out of their canoes midway during the race and get back in, almost without the boat slowing down.

In celebration of the Centennial nature of the regatta, there was a special race for canoes or skiffs in which the sum of the ages in each boat had to equal or exceed 100, with at least two persons 13 or under in age, and with propulsion limited to either two paddles or one pair of oars. A "Great Aunt Mary" at 75 years and weighing only 80 pounds was in big demand in

the scramble to make the age level with minimum weight. The winning combination was a skiff with two strong rowers, each in a separate seat, and each with one oar. Passengers made up the age requirement.

The end of a long day on the water, now past most suppertimes, was the Tilting. Our Muskoka variety requires a paddler, seated in the canoe bottom, while the tilter stands on canoe bottom with legs braced against a thwart and no personal padding permitted. The pole is 16 feet long, two inches in diameter, with a seven

inch chamois-covered pad on one end. The field is limited to sixteen teams competing in elimination rounds. The winner, for the eleventh time in the past nineteen years, was Paul Richards who announced his retirement this year at age 62 !

The Muskoka Lakes Association may now look forward to the next 100 years of aquatic regattas, realizing that there are families which have had four or five generations participating and, hopefully will produce another four or more generations who enjoy this particular kind of small boat messabout.



The Wee Skiff Event for 7 & Under found this 5 year old with dreams of Olympic glory.



Heading home at the end of a long day on Muskoka Lake.

Still on her daily runs after 105 years, the *Segwun*, last surviving inland lakes steamer in North America, plies the Muskoka Lakes.



10th Somes Sound Rowing Classic

By Reg Hudson

Just over two dozen human powered small boats turned out for our 10th Annual Somes Sound Rowing Classic just off Southwest Harbor, Maine, on July 2nd. While it is entitled "Rowing Classic", the event does cater to sea kayaks also and four of these took part.

As might be expected the Martin Elite sliding seat shells set the fastest times over the 2.9 mile triangular course in clear weather with a light northwest wind. John Condon set top time of the day at 22:24, corrected with his age handicap (he's 52) to 21:36.

Speaking of age, Evan Randolph at 84 rowed to 2nd in the Alden doubles with youthful David Brown (43), and Fred Beal at 79 rowed solo in fixed seat, while Bill Gribbel at 72 teamed with Steve Barnes (only 50) to win the fixed doubles. This event is well supported by those getting on in years, with the youngest entrants, Lori Dube and Sunny Penn being 38.

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AREY'S POND 2nd Annual Cat Boat Gathering

By Tony Davis

Twenty five catboats turned out for our Second Annual Catboat Gathering on August 3rd here on Pleasant Bay on Cape Cod, ten more than in 1993. Strong southwest winds made the racing very exciting, with boats beating against a low incoming tide on the first leg.

Only seconds separated the top fin-

ishers, with Dick Lovis' 18' Marshall top boat in this fastest class, edging three others all finishing in 1 hour and 29 minutes, separated only by seconds.

It was great sight to see Pleasant Bay full of catboat sails. I look forward to the coming years as our Arey's Pond 14, Kitten, and Beetle classes continue to grow.



Marshall cats in action in a stiff breeze, note reefs.

A catboat on the bay, a traditional summer scene on Cape Cod.



From August 10 through 14, we "Scuzzbums" (Southern California Small Boat Messabout Society) held our 2nd annual Giant Five Day Small Boat Messabout at Fiddler's Cove in South Bay, also known as the Naval Amphib Base Marina and RV Park. Over 80 people attended for multiple days and over 100 were present at two of the four meals. Cost for the

Giant Five-Day Messabout

By Annie Kolls

Messabout was \$5 per day per adult (campers were charged \$6 per night by the

marina management, and SCSBMS sprung for the porta-pot cost).

There were 50 or 60 beautiful and unique boats and some of the more unusual were the tops! schooner *Charles Radcliff*, a 16' miniaturized replica of the 1806 schooner *Pride of Baltimore* (complete with cannon) owned by Mike Porter of San Pedro; *Perfect 10*, a 10' micro-tugboat designed, built and owned by Berk Eastman of Fallbrook; *Drage*, a 20' gaff-rigged Caledonia yawl, built by Dr. and Mrs. Robert Cox of Livermore; *SO-DU-IT*, a prototype 14' wood "sloop" with carbon fiber "masts" on the transom, no mainsail, and a split jib, owned and built by Nils Anderssen of Spring Valley; and *Fury*, a vintage 1939 Australian Sixteen, owned by Annie Kolls of San Diego.

People brought their boats from as far away as Livermore, Watsonville, and Arizona. Some camped in the RV park, many others in tents and vehicles on the beach 1/4 mile south of the RV Park. It was a great setting. The Marina provided a fire ring, table with umbrella, benches and porta-pot for the campers. There were bonfires each night, complete with sea chanties by the "Famous Singing Klopfensteins". Paul Klopfenstein provided a slide show (projected on a sheet hung on a camper and powered by generator) of shots of the '94 Schooner Cup, taken during the race by a Navy man with a 1,000 mm telephoto lens.

SCSBMS started as a small-boat builders group, but has grown to include others. Although 90% of the members' boats are traditional and wood, we have a couple of small glass daysailers or camp-cruisers, and some are planning to build a small boat and are getting help from others. The messabouts are family-oriented, fairly unstructured, and very relaxed, usually held over weekends. Non-competitive and friendly, the club is a safe haven from the rat race.

The club has no officers, no meetings, no board of directors, etc. Annie Kolls ("Mother of all Scuzzbums") volunteered a few years ago to do the newsletter, and that is the main form of communication for the members, outside of the messabouts, which are usually organized by Kolls, but are sometimes hosted by other members. Messabouts are held in various places, including Mission Bay, Shelter Island, South Bay, Lake Morena, Colorado River, and Sea of Cortez in Baja California.

Interest in the club has grown rapidly in the last two years. There are now nearly 100 dues-paying members. The youngest flag member is 9 years old, the oldest around 85. (Official club photographer is 12 yr. old Questa Li Hogan of Olivenhain.) Cost of membership is currently \$15 per year, which includes the monthly newsletter, SCSBMS News. The newsletter is a format for members' letters, stories, photos, projects, and humor, involving small boats. Some members, including some from Alaska, Canada, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, and Australia, have never attended a messabout, but joined for the newsletter.

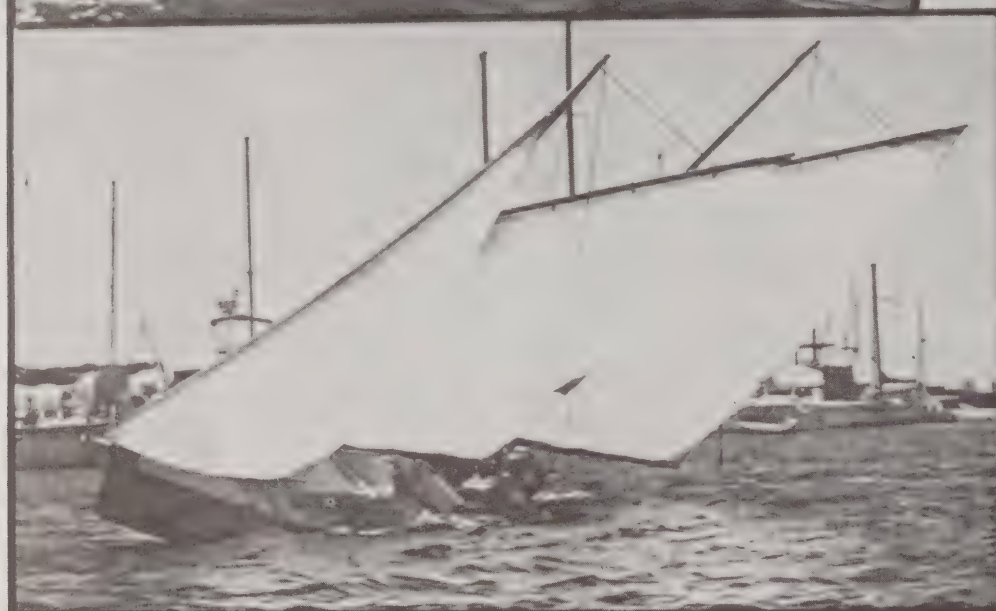
For more details, write to SCSBMS, 4048 Mt. Acadia Blvd., San Diego, CA 92111.



Launching the *Charles Radcliff*, a 16' replica of the 1806 *Pride of Baltimore*. The rig is complete. It took owner Mike Porter and his partner Ray Quinsley 15 hours to rig for launching! It takes three hours to unrig as the lines are all cut and discarded each time. A major effort.

A beach buffet of small boats. From the foreground can be seen a kayak, pirogue, Montgomery 12, ultralight canoe, 14' Little Gem skiff, Rhodes Robin, kayak, dory, Great Pelican, '39 Australian 16' sharpie, Cartopper and Great Pelican. All these and more gathered at the Giant Messabout in Coronado, California.







The summer of 1954 was the beginning of my life in boating and the interest that became almost an obsession has given me pleasure and brought me into contact with some wonderful characters. My life has been enriched by these people and the boats I've owned and built over the years.

I had a good job that enabled me to get fully into debt and it gave me a lot of time off. I indulged myself shamelessly. I bought a 16' planked runabout which was heavily built and fast for the princely sum of \$50. This sleek boat ran great at 22mph with a 12hp outboard while carrying almost a thousand lbs of people and cargo, aka camping and fishing gear.

My fellow firefighter and best friend, Noble Walker, and I began camp cruising on the best cruising grounds in California, the Sacramento/San Joaquin delta. We had almost decided to build, buy or steal a big sailboat and head off into the South Seas for a life of island hopping, coconuts, and hammocks. Not having a viable plan of what to do with our families and from where our incomes would derive deterred us, or gave us an excuse not to go, as it was a 99.9:1 odds on a bet that they wouldn't go along with this idyllic (idiotic?) scheme. My wife still doesn't like to leave town even for a day.

Noble, being the elder of this wild-haired partnership, decided the next best thing to being part-owner of a schooner would be to build a small cabin cruiser. This way we could cruise in tandem, he in his boat and me in mine. The delta would be our cruising grounds, as well as any other cruising waters we could find. He bought a kit boat called the Dillabaugh Rocket. This company had it's office and shop in Portland, Oregon, and their boats were reputed to be strong, seaworthy, and easy to assemble. The planking was 3/8" Douglas fir plywood instead of the usual 1/4" ply that other kit suppliers used. Noble was satisfied this boat would be durable and strong and offer useful longevity.

It turned out he was right, for the Rocket was in service long after Noble left his job as a firefighter and returned to college for his teaching credentials. He first tried this and that to make a living and his family moved the Rocket with them to Wyoming. It carried a considerable part of their belongings in it's innards while speeding along behind the family station wagon. It explored the waters of Wyoming in pursuit of the wily trout, but as wages weren't the best in Wyoming the family hitched up and headed for Fullerton, California where the college degree lay on the horizon and many adventures awaited the Dillabaugh Rocket.

The Dillabaugh Company made three models of the Rocket. A 12' runabout, which was a good performer with up to 7hp; the 14' runabout that could handle up to a claimed 20hp but was capable of much more, and the 19' cabin cruiser. The cruiser was everyone's choice, but in 1954 who could afford \$450 for the kit? Lots of money at that time. As soon as the Rocket kit arrived Noble, not one to procrastinate, had the ladder building platform up and the frames in place on the first evening. He didn't even have time to call me and let me know it had arrived.

The Dillabaugh Rocket (and It's Skipper)

By Rags Ragsdale

Perhaps here is a good place to do a thumbnail sketch of Mr. Walker. This man, my friend, could be described as liking having a good boat under his feet. However, saying only that he's my friend, is like saying the *Queen Mary* is a boat. How could I describe him after not having seen him for thirty years and not even knowing where he was? But then he popped up on my doorstep and back into my life looking as though not a year had passed.

Despite the thirty years which had passed I still considered him my best friend. He was, and still is, closer to me than a brother. We think alike. He is always ready to laugh at adversity, is a boon companion, and also innovative and tolerant of a situation. He is as strong as a bull, always has been. I once watched in awe as he grabbed a firehouse pole, the ones we slid down when the alarm bell rang, and climbed hand over hand to the very top nearly 25' above. The pole was 4" of polished brass and I'd like to see the men nowadays who could even grip a pole that size. Not many. I would not be surprised if he said he could do the same feat now and would take any and all bets he could duplicate it. He is, as he says, "on the threshold of old age," now. He is 76 years old and frighteningly wiry and powerful.

I once convinced him that hammocks were the way to beat sleeping on unimproved river banks, if trees were available in appropriate positions and numbers. During one night he fell from his hanging perch and lay on the grassy slope the rest of the night not in the least bothered by the possibility of a 12' plunge into the river below.

He stood on the front deck of my runabout once as we approached a low, flat shore about three feet higher than the deck. He was the picture of a "full of business" sailor, his cap at "full square", his curved pipe clenched in his firm jaw, his muscles coiled to leap upon the shore with the anchor in hand to hook around one of the small oaks growing there. On a straight in approach, I shifted to neutral about 10' from shore, then to reverse gear at about 3', and just as I applied throttle to stop, Noble leaped for the flat of the cut-banked shore. The boat responded to both the reverse thrust of the engine and to the opposite reaction of Noble's mighty jump. The results were spectacular! Noble's leap went straight up, the bow of the boat disappeared from beneath him and he plunged straight as an arrow into the river.

After a moment or two his head popped to the surface. With cap still in place but slightly skewed to one side, and pipe still solidly clenched in the corner of that firm jaw, he hissed as he spoke through his teeth and around the pipestem,

"Well, I held onto that anchor all the way to the bottom!" This is the man who chose the Dillabaugh Rocket for his boat. They suited each other. Both were stout and tough as well as ready to take on any waters, fresh and salt. They did too.

I was able to help a little in her assembly, but not much as I didn't relish being run over by Noble as he moved around his garage shop at his normal speed. Most would describe it as a blur. Imagine colliding with a keg of nails at thirty-nine miles per hour!

The shakedown cruise took place at Santa Cruz and then some more testing was done at a local lake to see how the Rocket liked fishing. It did. A few more trips locally and then the Rocket acquired a cuddy cabin. It made a great place to sleep in and was large enough to accommodate the two of us once in a rain which lasted all night. A tarp tied across the open ended cuddy kept us dry and sleeping was great.

On one trip, we abandoned my runabout and continued on in the Rocket because it's cabin gave us shelter from the downpour that threatened to end our cruise. The runabout was safe at Frank's Tract Resort. After a night's rest we awoke to bright sunshine and made a landing at a small town that was an old sugar beet port when the beets were transported by steamer rather than by the trucks of the present. Our purpose was to have a "store bought" breakfast and not have to cook aboard the little space in the Rocket.

As we explored the streets of "Terminus", the little port's name, we found no restaurant open. Too early. Finally a service station operator told us it was Sunday. That made sense seeing as how we had started on Saturday. He also told us of one place that would open in a few minutes and pointed it out to us.

A woman was coming down a set of outside stairs on the old clapboard building as we approached. She was still in the process of buttoning her waitress uniform as she opened the dusty white double doors. It could have been at the turn of the century. Inside, she buttoned the last button and gave her uncombed hair a quick fluff and flipped on the switches of the coffee maker. She then grabbed a half full container of yesterday's coffee and set it on the hot plate. Then as she scratched unconcernedly she said, "Coffee'll be ready in a minute boys, what would you like for breakfast?"

Words failed us as we looked at each other and gave the stools back to the flies that had been the first customers and wordlessly walked out. Cooking aboard was a banquet compared to the previous prospects. We told the Rocket about it and thanked it for its patience. We could tell it liked our compliments.

Time flew by too quickly and soon our cruise would end "tomorrow". We spotted the *Mandeville*, a derelict old sugar beet steamer, which had been backed into a tiny cove and left to the rats, mud, tide and scavengers to attend to her final demise. We would do our part to help her along too as we had to board her and explore the slanting decks and the wheelhouse with it's big iron wheel and wooden spokes. The tide ran in and out of her open hold and the mud was deep and slimy, but at low tide, as it now was, it was possible to in-

vestigate the empty engine room and hold. Many old tools were lying around. Huge open end wrenches and, to Noble's delight, a massive vise. This great-jawed monster was still in pristine condition except for a coating of mud that had collected at the spring tides on the heavy oil and grease that still coated the whole mass. That whole mass weighed at least 70lbs. Using the old wrenches Noble loosened the four huge bolts and the vise was ours. Ours, that is, if we could haul it out and over the obstacle course to the Rocket, tied nose to nose with the steamer.

Carrying the vise took both of us and we went up ladders, across decks, over the wheelhouse roof (no side deck there, strangely) and finally to the slanted front deck where we managed to lower it to the deck of the Rocket. In minutes we had muscled it under the bow deck. It weighed so much that we couldn't get the Rocket to plane for the rest of the trip. However, the Rocket didn't complain a bit. She liked a slow cruise as well as we did.

The Rocket left town shortly after that and this brings us to her arrival in Fullerton, California. The travels of Noble and the Dillabaugh Rocket were long from over. One trip included an overnight run to Catalina Island where they spent the night tied to a mooring, sleeping through the gentle swell that seems to constantly enter the harbor there. The Rocket took the island channel in stride and a steady pace took her both ways with no problems and a time of two hours each way. Long Beach was her home port and her skipper, Noble, fished her for several years, trusting her fine seakeeping ability and speed to take

him on many extended coastwise fishing and overnight trips. Then college began to take more and more time, but Noble and the Rocket traveled to Lake Powell a few times and cruised the wild canyons and explored the red sandstone beauty of the southern Utah wonderland.

The Rocket grew tired of waiting for Noble and was sold to a man in Anaheim, California, who began to enjoy the happy abilities of the small 14' boat that was such a part of Noble Walker's life before that life became so complicated. In a 14' boat life is simple and unmixed with worry, especially if it's a boat as strong and agile as the Rocket. Not all 14' boats are as capable as the Rocket and not many boats that size make their crews dream of

the adventures Noble and his boat undertook. But that little Rocket made those dreams possible because it was strong, seaworthy, and ready to go. He kept it packed with food, water, extra clothes, and fishing gear, so it could stay out overnight or longer on a moment's notice.


Are kit boats still built by people with dreams of grand adventure? If you asked Noble about the Catalina trip, he would tell you he is glad he tried it, but I also think he would tell you his boat was the reason he thought of trying it. He knew his boat. Kit boats once were the only way us little guys could get afloat and I wonder, are we missing something here? Perhaps we should ask my "Noble" friend.

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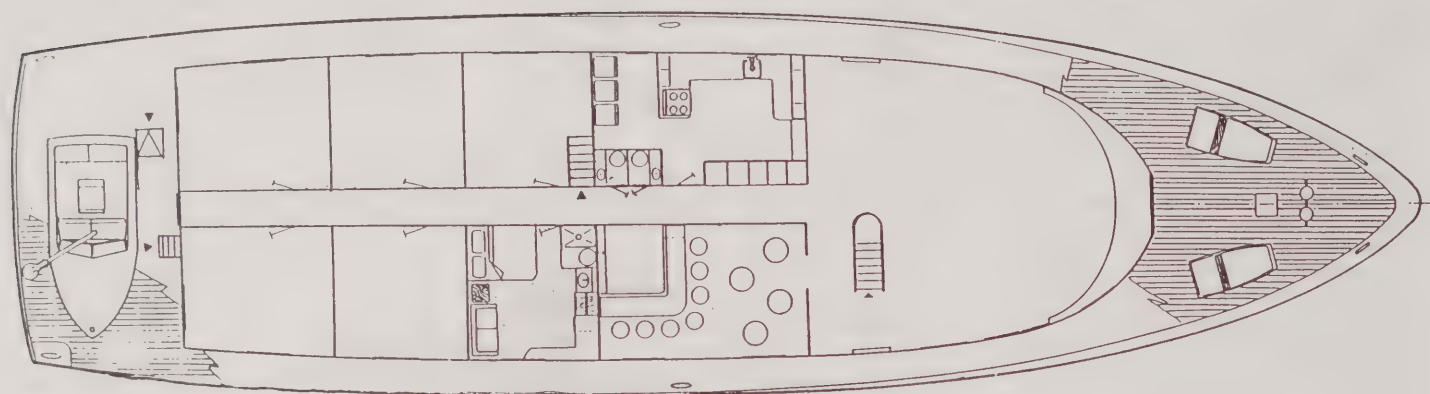
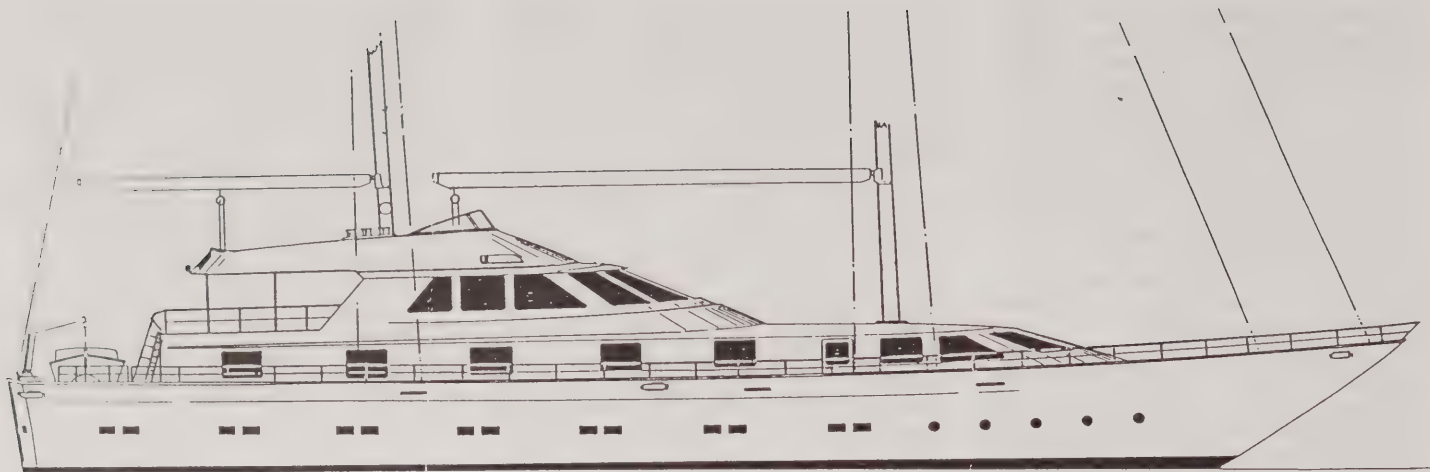
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The owners will work ship. Captain today, cook tomorrow, depending on level of capability.

Much of the final design and operation will depend on a survey of interested persons. Should the cabins be larger, smaller? Will "commercial" finish do, or should it be hand-rubbed teak interior, at about \$2 million more?

With about 50 people on board (about four tons of "movable ballast") it is planned to have a galley that serves cafeteria style. No choices, and sandwiches for lunch.

Condoship

Design by Jim Betts
Styled by Robert L. Rioux

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Interested persons will be asked to vote on the ship's route. Sail endlessly around the world? Based in the Atlantic/Caribbean? Based in the Pacific? Europe? How much time at sea vs. time in port? Depending on the number of serious buyers, several ships may be built, depending on cruising locations.

I think a tour of the ship will explain a lot of the details.

Let's start with the flying bridge: This is the control center. Helm, winches and essential instrumentation. In calm weather, or in port, this is covered with an awning. Seating is provided for the working crew and those who want a lot of sun and fresh air.

Below this is the enclosed bridge. Main helm, navigation station, plus a couple of swivel chairs for those who await their turn or just want to watch. And a settee and dinette for the "lounge-lizard" set, or those on the sail-trimming watch who want to get in out of the sun or rain. A captain's cabin, if needed. There is no requirement for a licensed captain, because the ship does not carry passengers for

hire, but there is some question about insurance. Insurance (\$60K per year) calls for a licensed captain unless the combined experience of the owners is such that it equals the qualifications of such a captain. Note that such a captain gets some \$60K a year, plus consumes a cabin that could be sold. Plus a cabin for the Executive Officer, who I see as me. Aft of this is a sheltered deck that is 30'x20'. This may be enclosed with curtains in bad weather.

On the main deck (starting at the bow), we find a foredeck for those who like to have the wind in their face, plus, eight nested, modified Optimist Prams. These have removable seats and removable keels with no centerboard trunk, so they can nest. These will be used to race when in port. "Race around the world in an 8' boat." It is anticipated that *Condoship* will attract a lot of retired sailboat racers who still like the sport.

The main salon (or saloon) is about 30'x28' and is the main "social center" of the ship. While the details of this are not shown, it consists of mini-cockpits, designed to be comfortable when under way or in port. Some of them are replicas of the cockpits of such famous boats as *Spray* and *Trekka*.. A floating "historic site," so to say.

On the port side there is a galley that serves cafeteria style. Aft of that is a pantry with refrigerators and such (main food stores are below). Opening into the companionway are ice machines and vending machines. Also two heads. On the starboard side is a bar. This is a replica of the old Whaler Bar in the Midston House Hotel in New York, if anyone remembers.

Aft of that, six cabins, one of which is shown in detail.

Aft of that, a 20-foot shore launch.

Now to the cabin deck. This is really what makes it work. Twenty cabins, each about 11'x14'. The two forward will be very spartan singles for rich boat-bums or those who always wanted to live "Two Years Before the Mast." Or you can take the book or video out of the ship's library. I haven't cracked down on this area, because it all depends on the wishes of the potential owners.

Below this is the engine room. Twin 450hp MTUs or similar, gen sets, water makers, batteries and this and that. Plus storage and tankage and four more (very cheap) cabins. The ship's laundry is also down there. Ensign Pulver, where are you?

The rig is fairly simple: Two jibs and a main and mizzen. Furl-in-the-mast system, with hydraulic, push-button winches, if the owners want that. For us retired types, it seems like a good idea.

I see this with steel hull and aluminum superstructure, but am also looking into composites.

Who is Jim Betts?

In the '60s, I founded the International Amateur Boat Building Society and published *Amateur Boat Building* magazine. In 1970, I co-founded the Yacht Design Institute with Ted Brewer and co-authored the book *Understanding Boat Design* with Ted. I have raised sailboats for some 40 years (I am 65) including crewing with the late George O'Day. I have built 5 of the 11 boats I have owned, two to my own design. My latest effort was the *SO-DU-IT!* 14-footer. In "real life," I am a retired journalist. (Associated Press, etc.), author of 5 books, for the past 12 years, editor and publisher of *New Product Development Newsletter* and a consultant in that area. I think *Condoship* is a new-product boat. A new concept. New opportunity for us old salts who are tired of riding the rail.

Editor Comments:

The arrival here of Jim's design concept prompted me to suggest to him that his idea was bizarre in the extreme. Without venturing to comment on the technicalities of the ship, I suggested that keeping fifty people happily confined in so small a facility would be an impossible exercise in managing human nature.

Jim Replies:

"You don't know from "bizarre" until you price out this baby! Some \$75K for sails, hydraulic winches at \$14K ea. (need

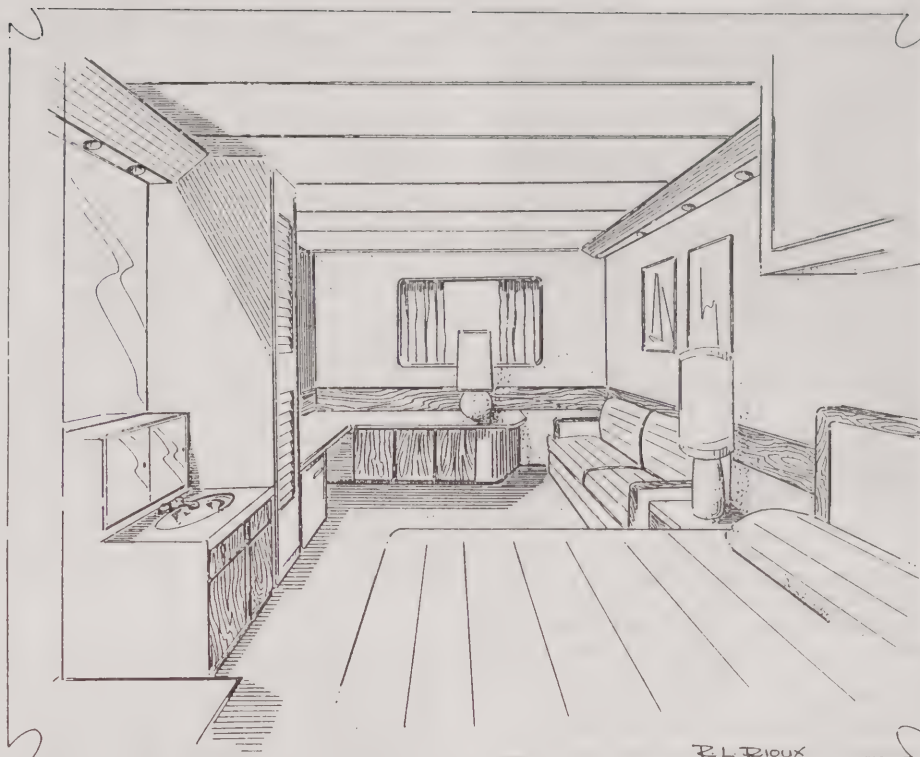
six), etc.

You are right on when you observe that this is a "community" (psychology was my minor, journalism the major). Like a condo, it will be "one-share/one-vote," but then we must decide how many votes are needed to carry a question. At the outset, those who are interested will receive a survey to try to settle many of the points early-on. Do we HQ in Florida and just knock around the Caribbean in winter and go north in summer, or do we sail around the world endlessly? Or be HQ'd in the Med? Maybe several ships?

Day-to-day decisions (How long are we going to stay in Bermuda?) will have to be put to a vote as required.

Note that I've worked in many "areas" where people can gather in small groups. Foredeck, salon (with "conversation areas"?), bar, working flying bridge, social bridge below that, wheelhouse and poop deck (sit in the shore launch). Those who want to get away from it all just stay in their cabins. If you want to recall your times on the subway, sit in the engine room.

A paid captain (whose word is law) would solve some problems, but then he works for us.



Yes, I read *Psychology of Sailing* and I've done some long hauls in close quarters (Bermuda, Hawaii, etc.). I think (in my experiences at least) that the pressure of racing was a big factor. A more relaxed mood should be a plus.

So far, I have four people "seriously" interested. One, blessedly, is a local dentist who plans to retire in about two years.

When things start to happen, I'll keep you posted on survey results, etc. When (he sez) we are in Maine waters, you'll be invited to sail with us a day or two. By then, you may be old enough to retire!

Call this "Messing about in Boats Never-Never Land," but it's fun.

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What You Are Building



His First Command

Here is my son Everett Paul Whallon at the helm of his first command, a cradle pram. Building his vessel was my first difficult boat building project and I must say that I enjoyed every step and every problem solved. This was a great introduction to the basics of small boat building.

Paul Whallon, Cedartown, GA.

A Stretch Bolger Bee

About two years ago I built a Bolger Bee and installed a 9.9hp Mercury outboard. I had a ball cruising the lakes around my home in Salem, Virginia. It would go about 23mph on flat water but I had to slow down for wakes and chop.

I took it to Clayton, New York, last summer to the antique boat show and putted around in the St. Lawrence, running scared once when an ocean going container ship came down the main channel throwing up a four foot bow wave I had to negotiate head on to avoid taking on water.

It is light enough to carry on my truck bed rack. I fished from it but found it crowded at only 7' long, so I decided to build a stretch version 10' long. I used four sheets of 1/4" BC pine for the extended

sides and 1/2" ply for the bottom. I found that should have been 3/4" ply when I tried the new boat out as the 1/2" bottom clearly flexed on hitting waves. I built in three storage/flotation chambers that can keep my water sensitive stuff, like lunch, dry.

The new boat has a 20hp Mercury outboard for power and will go about 25mph. It is great for fishing with much more room and is very stable. The boats are both painted with a bright yellow automotive enamel with epoxy undercoat. This helps protect me from being run over by bigger boats, but just in case I also fly a fluorescent orange bicycle flag on a six foot pole.

Steve Krzysko, Salem, VA.

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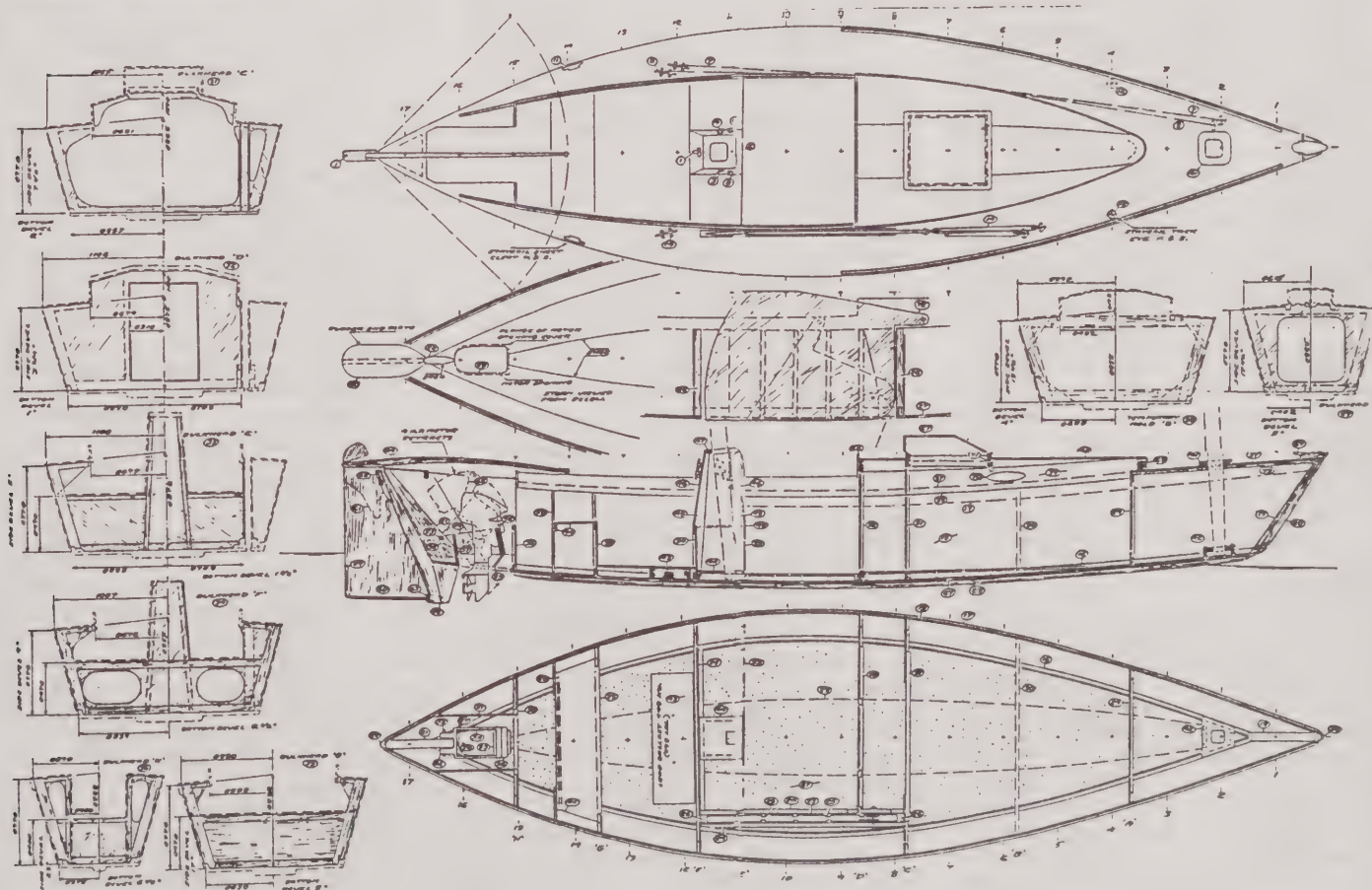
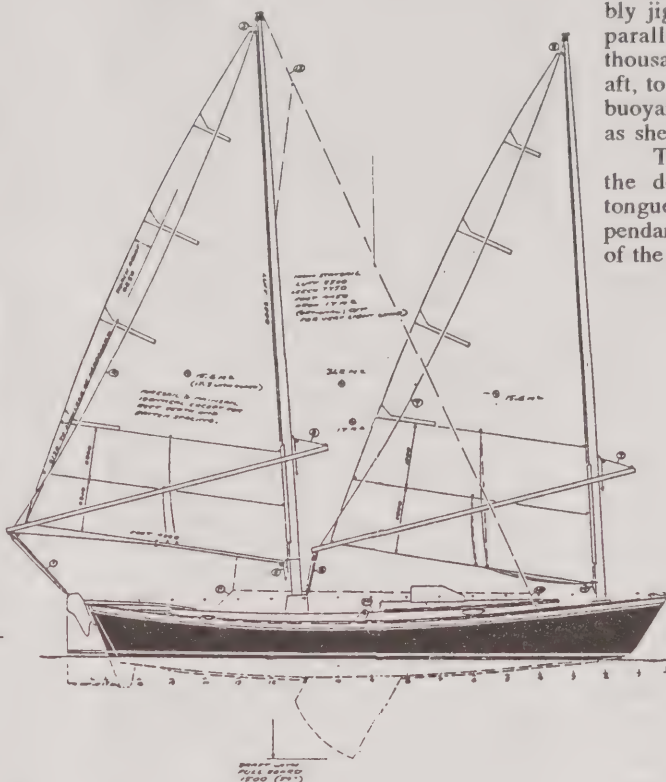
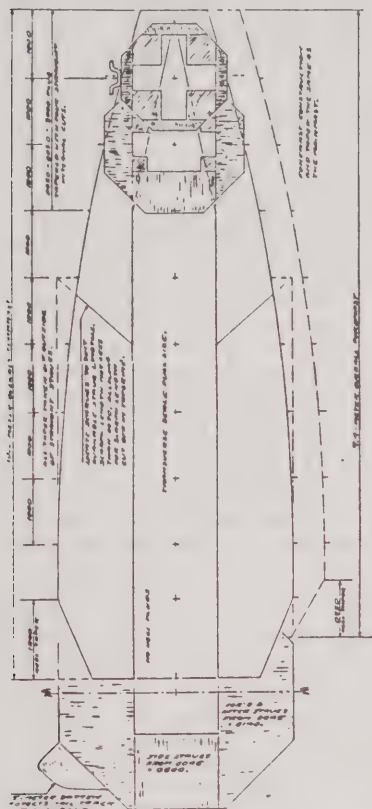
8.85M x 2.28M x .45M (29'0" x 7'5" x 1'6")

A development of the Munroe "Egret" type for sailing in the vicinity of Sydney, Australia. Her big rig can be shortened without spoiling her balance by taking deeper reefs in the foresail than in the mainsail.

The outboard motor is fitted to the sharp-stern hull by swinging the motor mount up and back into the flare of the stern, with a minimum hole in the bottom and preemption of space for the slop well.

She's prefabricated without an assembly jig. The side panels have straight and parallel edges and constant bevels. A thousand pounds of ballast is placed well aft, to carry her bow high. The weight and buoyancy are so arranged that her bow lifts as she heels.

The off-centerboard trunk opens to the deck outside the coaming, with a tongue on the board to keep the hoisting pendant in the open through the full travel of the board.



Techniques, Tools, Materials: Your Ideas & Needs

Recently Harold Payson made an admission. He said that he will never again try to finish fir plywood without sheathing it in some kind of cloth matrix. He pointed out that no matter how well one seals, primes, fairs and finishes fir plywood it will check badly sooner or later.

Of course, one way to avoid more elaborate finishing methods is to use a close-grained plywood, like mahogany for instance. I have had good luck sealing and painting mahogany plywood. Properly sealed in epoxy they're unlikely to check.

Still, even a good close-grained marine plywood may check eventually, if it is not sheathed in a cloth matrix. It is far too time-consuming and difficult to carefully finish a surface only to have it check and look dreadful in a year or two. Not to mention the fact that a good cloth sheathing is a superior water barrier that can last for many years with minimal maintenance.

WoodenBoat recently published an excellent article on sheathing materials and methods, written by a professional boatbuilder. He detailed the use and abuse of several available sheathing cloths. It's required reading for anyone contemplating this job. I also highly recommend the *System 3 Epoxy Book*. And, finally, the old Chem Tech manual has some excellent information in it, including a past article on this subject from *WoodenBoat* that has much valuable information in it. If you don't have this manual, borrow it from a friend. Maybe *System 3* will reissue this sometime, since they bought out Chem Tech.

I'd like to share my experience, now nearly complete, of preparing and sheathing the topsides-to-bottom-of-the-chine of my Bolger Black Skimmer.

The bottom of the boat had been sheathed in fiberglass up to the top of the chine. I believe the glass was saturated with epoxy, but I'm not sure. Whatever the resin involved, the glass appears to be adhering well, with just a couple of little delaminations, after eight years of being in-water all season, and hard winters in a yard. However, the builder did not sheath the topsides in cloth. This was a real mistake. The builder had taken much time and trouble to fair the topsides (using some kind of polyester putty near as I can tell), and gave them a several good coats of alkyd enamel. Still, when I bought the boat, the plywood was checking badly, both above and below the waterline, which is unacceptable, especially now that the boat will be trailered, constantly undergoing wet/dry periods.

I ground all the paint off (grind bottom paint in a boat-yard if you can, it's toxic stuff, and protect your lungs and skin thoroughly while you do this grinding!) down to wood in some places, but mostly down to the fairing compound. It seemed foolish to grind it all off, since I would have been left with a terribly unfair surface. I put test patches of cloth and resin in a few places around the hull, let them dry to hard "green," then ripped them off. The fairing compound appeared to be sticking quite well. It is of course possible that moisture could get under the compound

Sheathing Tips

By Charles Andrews

from the other side of the plywood (but unlikely since the other side is pretty well sealed, and the veneer glue lines are a vapor barrier of sorts), and cause delamination, but I'm taking the chance that it won't. There is no problem with the epoxy adhering to polyester: Ground with a heavy grit, polyester is an excellent base for epoxy.

Ideally one would grind all the way down to wood on the entire surface to be sheathed. I did not. I suppose it depends on the situation. If the fairing compound had been sticking poorly I would have had to get it all off.

I purchased two lengths of spun polypropylene cloth (one for each side of the boat) from Defender Industries in New Rochelle, New York. Spun cloth is a real resin hog, but woven monofilament polypropylene cloth is unavailable since the company that made Versatex stopped production. Versatex was great stuff, and I mourn its passing. Still, this spun polypropylene makes for a very strong and resilient sheathing: it's just a little harder to work with than Versatex.

The chief reason for sharing this experience with you is to describe my method of applying the cloth over an epoxy-sealed, sanded, dry surface.

Polypropylene has many excellent properties. It is strong, resilient, wets out around very tight compound curves with ease, and its dust does not itch. However, it has one signal drawback, it floats. If one tries to fill the weave on the first wet-out the cloth simply floats to the top of the resin puddles. This can be maddening, and can result in a grotesquely unfair surface after the epoxy hardens.

The recent *WoodenBoat* article described an excellent method of "tacking" down the cloth to partly-hardened, tacky resin, which allows the builder to get around the floating problem. I won't go into this method in detail, since the article is quite complete. But, this is no method for cowards (of which I am one). Using this method you have only one chance to get the cloth "tacked" down. If you make a mistake the cloth will be wrinkled, the weave distorted, and the job will be ruined. In a professional yard, where speed is very important, this would be the only way to apply polypropylene.

For those home builders among us however who work alone and are not willing to risk \$100 worth of sheathing cloth for the sake of speed there is another way. It is slow, and tedious, but it always works.

Use masking tape to secure the cloth carefully to the surface to be sheathed. Cut the cloth to shape where necessary. The cloth will wet-out around most curves and angles, but some angles will require small darts or other cut-outs. Make all these cuts before you start the wet-out. Make sure you are well protected from the epoxy, since this is going to be rather messy, especially if, as I was, you are working with a

vertical surface. Use long-sleeved shirts, pants, apron, and appropriate gloves. If you are indoors use an appropriate respirator and/or forced ventilation. Even outdoors the respirator is not a bad idea, although the 2:1 *System 3* resin I use has a pretty low content of volatiles.

Use a 2" or so natural bristle brush (have a couple of dozen of these available, you're in "throw-away" mode). Have a Lido or similar plastic squeegee handy, it's vital to the job.

Start in the center of the surface (in my case amidships above the leeboard guard) and work your way outwards evenly in all directions. The polypropylene expands significantly as it becomes saturated (especially in the direction in which you squeegee it) and you need to be able to smooth wrinkles by stretching the cloth outwards as you go. Apply the resin with the brush in a daubing motion, making sure the cloth is completely saturated with resin, but no more! The Chem Tech manual is very clear about this, and my experience doing this more than once has been unambiguous.

Apply just enough resin to saturate the cloth, and allow capillary action to stick the cloth to the surface below, but do not try to fill the weave. Once you have saturated a square foot or so use your squeegee to move excess resin outwards in all directions (on this current job I mostly squeegeed left and right, toward bow and stern, and not much up and down). You know you have just the right amount of resin in the cloth when it is transparent, but the weave is not filled up, and there are no bubbles of air or pockets of resin under the cloth. You achieve this state of minimum saturation by squeegeeing all excess resin away toward the edges of the job.

The chief drawback to this method is that the resin becomes aerated. It becomes increasingly hard to saturate the cloth with clear resin, the tiny bubbles created by daubing and squeegeeing become part of the matrix. This can also happen during the next coat, the open weave may be filled with bubbles instead of clear resin.

I do not have a good solution to this. If you are very confident you can "brush" the resin into the cloth instead of daubing it, but this uses more resin, which must be squeegeed out, and in general is less precise and more messy than the daubing method, although I have done it both ways.

Obviously it would be best if there were no bubbles at all in the matrix. But I have found that if the chief reason for applying a sheath is water and abrasion resistance the tiny bubbles caused by aeration are not a big deal, there is more than enough resin in the cloth to do the job. But there will be tiny bubbles, sometimes lots of them. I just don't find them a problem. But depending on the purpose of the sheathing such bubbles might be unacceptable, in which case the "tack-down" method described in *WoodenBoat* is your other option.

One way to cut down on excess aeration is to avoid using a whole batch of resin. As you use the resin up what is left

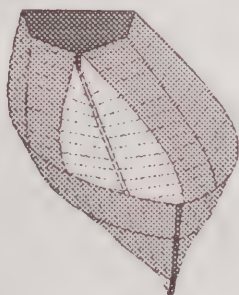
will be more and more aerated. Rather than using the last few bits of resin in your pot, mix a new batch, and mix the left-over aerated resin into the new batch.

During a largish job like the one I have just completed I had more than one "wet edge" at once. I simply work in one direction more rapidly and keep the other edge wet by working outwards slowly on it with each batch of new resin.

Mix only small batches of resin. It's a lot of mixing, but this is a slow method and you don't want to waste those lovely, expensive hydrocarbons.

It took me about 8 hours a side to get the cloth on the boat. As soon as the resin in the cloth has begun to harden, and the cloth is well-adhered to the substrate, you can begin to apply the next coat of resin, to fill in the weave of the cloth. After that proceed as normal, building up the resin thickness coat by coat. I recommend at least two rather heavy coats of resin before light sanding or grinding, then just keep applying resin until the build is to your liking.

I can't really comment on the best fairing methods, everybody develops their own. And I'm still experimenting. But this method of applying polypropylene has worked well for me. The cloth is a superior material for this purpose.



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Boatwork

By Scott White

Coolness

Living aboard a small boat in Florida can be a most uncomfortable existence, especially in the summer. Getting comfortable in hot weather means getting cool.

If you reject air-conditioning, coolness depends on two factors: Ventilation and shade. I reject A/C because I've seen it in action aboard a 42' teak ketch. The interior smelled musty and dank. The windows were always fogged. I had the feeling of being somehow closed in. It made such a strong impression that I have since turned down the offer of a free window air conditioning unit.

Ventilation is cheap and simple if you have dockside power. Forget windscoops and the like. Buildings, neighboring boats and other structures, not to mention the weather itself, make wind a most unreliable source of comfort. On a muggy hot and breathless night it is, by definition, unavailable.

Spend \$20 or less for a box type window fan. Mount it to exhaust out through the fore hatch. It will pull many hundreds of cubic feet of air through the boat each minute. In wet weather you can partly close the hatch and trust the outgoing air stream to keep out the rain or you can drape a piece of fabric over the hatch and leave it open. Even with the hatch completely closed the ceiling-fan circulating action, combined with the cooler air during a rain shower, will keep you pretty happy.

While exhausting air through the hatch the fan is pulling air into the boat through whichever other hatches or ports you open. These act as independent sources for cooling breezes which let you sleep under a light blanket on all but the very hottest of summer nights. During the heat of an afternoon a little eight inch clip-on fan provides the final touch of comfort.

Shade is supplied by an awning. If it is big enough it will shelter open ports and hatches during a shower but it's main job is keeping off the sun. The moment

you put it into action you can feel the cabin temperature drop by an easy ten plus degrees

A successful awning is sturdy, inexpensive and simple. The awning itself is made of a cheap poly tarp, 10'x20' or so gives overlap at the sides and is a good size for *Sun Hawk*. This costs about \$20 and lasts a year before the sun's ultraviolet rots it and it disintegrates. When that happens I just throw it out and buy another.

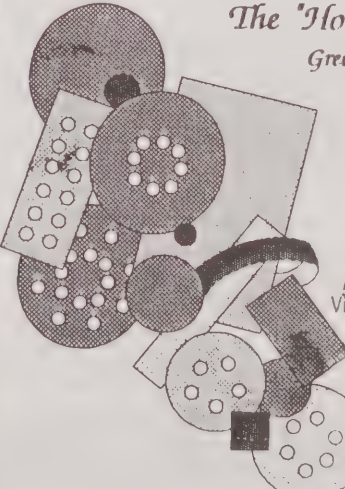
The framework is made from PVC pipe, 3/4" for cabin top hoops, 1" for horizontals and up to 2" for tightly guyed verticals. Use the 45 and 90 degree and T shaped couplings for joints but do not use PVC cement to hold everything together. Instead run 1/8" nylon cord through the pipe and joints and tie it off under tension. This makes for easier cut-and-try assembly and much easier dis-assembly while at the same time giving your structure the ability to yield a bit without breaking when it is hit by a gust of wind or by yourself in a mistimed leap from the seawall.

You will need to drill holes near the ends of the vertical supports to pass the cords out for fastening to brass or stainless screw eyes set in the deck. A little epoxy resin in the holes before you screw in the eyes will keep everything safe from water and rot. A 1" high circular plug screwed to the deck, smaller in diameter than the ID of the vertical pipe, and positioned where pipe meets deck, will hold the base in position laterally. A couple more screw eyes set into the cabin sides near the roof and a couple of inches apart will let the pipe be tied securely between them. Again, a bit of epoxy resin stuck into the holes with a Q-tip will seal out moisture and will not keep you from unscrewing the eyes when you need to remove them.

Make sure your framework has a peak down the center and use tensioned line for as much of the horizontal supports as possible. Tie the tarp to the framing with more 1/8" or smaller nylon. If you pass lengths of cord over the tarp as well you will eliminate most of the wind caused flapping.

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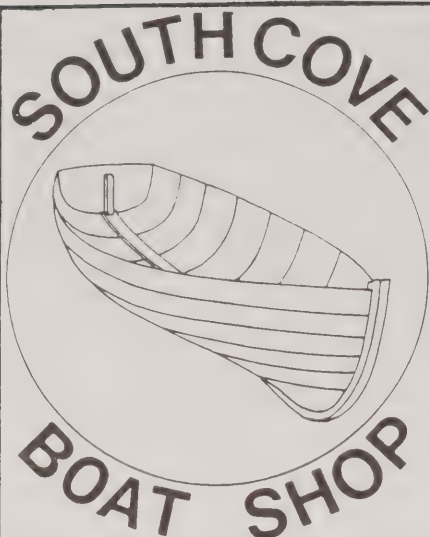
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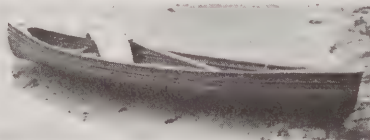
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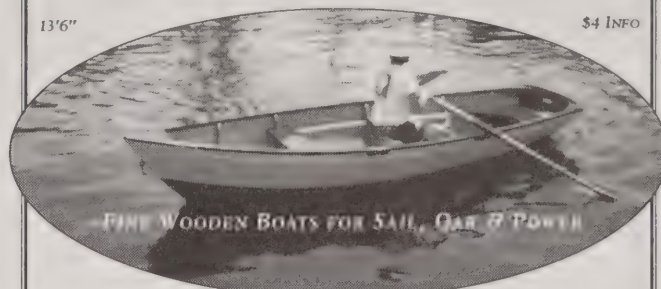
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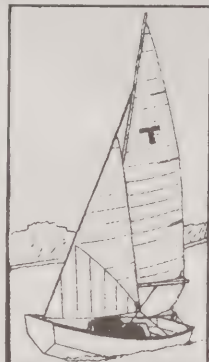
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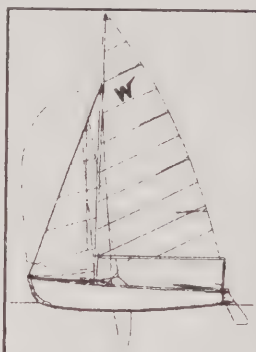
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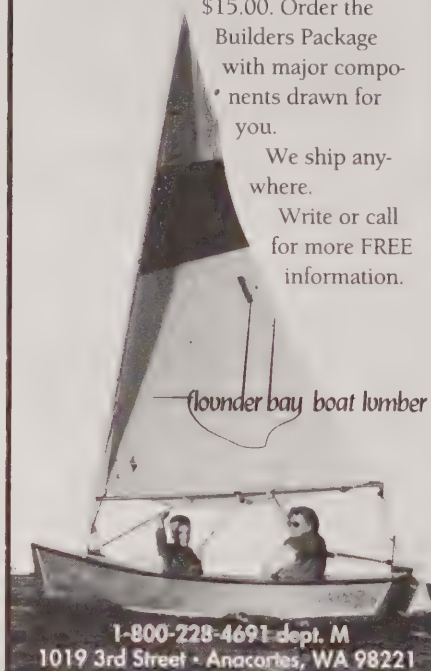
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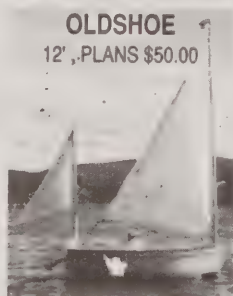
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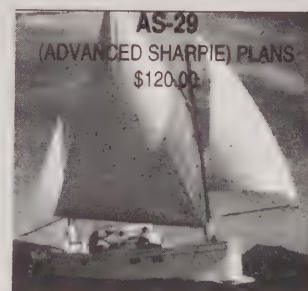
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(Starting with the August 1, 1994 issue, I have revised the ad format by using **bold print** for each boat/item advertised to better highlight them for ease of locating your needs.)

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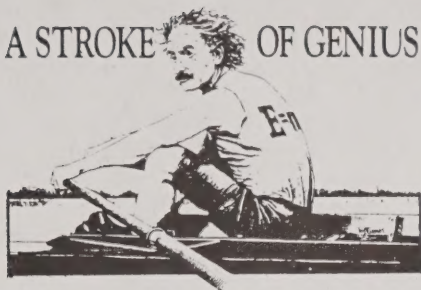
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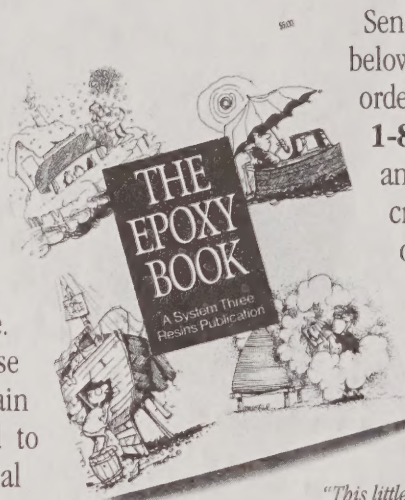
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